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A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

RESURRECTION

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

In THREE PARTS.

WHEREIN,

I. The CONSEQUENCES of the *Doctrine* are Stated Hypothetically.

II. The *Nature and Obligation* of MORAL EVIDENCE are explain'd at large.

III. The PROOFS of the FACT of our SAVIOUR'S RESURRECTION are Propos'd, Examin'd, and fairly Demonstrated to be CONCLUSIVE.

Together with an

APPENDIX

CONCERNING

The Impossible Production of *Thought* from *Matter and Motion:* The Nature of *Human Souls*, and of *Brutes:* The *Anima Mundi*, and the Hypothesis of the ΤΟ ΠΑΝ; as also, concerning *Divine Providence*, the *Origin of Evil*, and the *Universe* in General.

Ἠγέρθη ὁ Κύριος ὄντως. Luke xxiv. 34.

By *HUMPHRY DITTON*,
Late Master of the New Mathematical School in *Christ's Hospital.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

Right Reverend FATHER in GOD,

JOHN,

Lord Biſhop of *Ely*.

My LORD,

I Know not to whom a Diſcourſe of *this Nature* could be more properly inſcribed, than to a Prelate of the Chriſtian Church, ſo conſpicuous for a pious Zeal for the *Subject* it treats of, and of ſuch known Abilities placed in an eminent Station, as Your Lordſhip is. And I have this

peculiar Satisfaction in having obtained the Favour of Your Lordſhip's Patronage, that tho' I am conſcious the Defects in the Performance cannot eaſily lie concealed from Your Lordſhip's Judgment; yet I am under the protection of ſo much goodneſs and candour, that I dare be eaſy, even when I repreſent Your Lordſhip to my ſelf in the ſeverer Poſture of an Examinant.

My Deſign in the following Papers, my Lord, does not go ſo *low* as a bare *Vindication* of Chriſtianity; and I ſhould have thought it almoſt a Crime to have given them *that Name*. Your Lordſhip knows Chriſtianity does not need to be merely *Defended*, after ſuch a Courſe of *miraculous* Triumphs, as *Divine Providence* has given it over all the vain *Reaſon* and *Philoſophy*, as well as the *Power* and *Malice* of the World.

Indeed, when the Religion was *Young*, and lay open to publick Slander and Calumny, then the humble Method of *Apology* was every way the moſt proper and uſeful: But I know of no Reaſons that oblige us, at this Time of the Day, to *apologize* for our *Faith* to the Enemies of Chriſtianity; who

who tho' they have a right to *civil Uſage*, yet are not to be treated with *Form* and *Ceremony*. Not ſo much becauſe Chriſtianity has now the *Civil Power* on its Side; as becauſe it has vigorouſly made its way through all Oppoſition by the *bright Evidence of Truth* it carries along with it, and for ſo many Ages put to ſilence all the Ignorance of *Gainſayers*. It was for this Reaſon, my Lord, that I propoſed to do nothing elſe in this Treatiſe, but to ſet *the great Argument of our Saviour's Reſurrection* in a fair Light before them; to ſhew them upon what unqueſtionable Principles they may, if they will, aſſure themſelves that the Doctrine is true; and ſo leave it entirely to them to make the *Concluſion* as they ſhall think fit.

Your Lordſhip very well knows, *What ſort of Anſwers* uſe to be returned to all Undertakings of this kind; which, as far as I could ever yet find, are reducible either to *Banter and Ridicule*, or *ſlight Reflection upon Matters remote from the grand Point in Diſpute*. By theſe Methods, indeed, a Controverſy may be made *perpetual*; but then they who make uſe of them, plainly

ſhew, that it is neither their *Intereſt* nor their *Deſire* to have it decided.

I have often thought, my Lord, how *lucky* it is for the Enemies of Chriſtianity under Chriſtian Governments, that the prudent Care of the Magiſtrate has made it *unſafe* for them to ſay all they pretend they have to ſay againſt Revealed Religion. For by this means, they not only avoid the Diſcredit of coming off poorly, after very loud and inſolent Boaſts; but alſo get the Reputation of having ſome very ſhrewd Objections in *Reſerve*, which now it is alledged they are forced to ſuppreſs, for fear of *affronting the Publick*. This is a moſt happy Co-incidence! And thoſe Gentlemen may think themſelves indebted to a Government for ſuch a Favour as that of refuſing them the Liberty of *Speaking* and *Writing* as freely as they *Think*. Nor does ſuch a *neceſſary Reſtraint* as this any more deſerve the odious Name of *Perſecution*, than Perſecution itſelf merits the glorious Title of *pure Zeal for the Goſpel*.

However, my Lord, tho' the *very indecent Liberties* that have been taken with Chriſtianity have juſtly induced thoſe who have

have Power in their Hands to take proper Meaſures for its Defence from *open* and *rude Aſſaults*; yet I can ſcarce perſuade my ſelf, that any Chriſtian *Proteſtant* State would deny Unbelievers of Revealed Religion *who ſhewed a ſincere Deſire of being better informed*, the Liberty of propoſing the *real Scruples* of their Minds in a convenient, ſober and modeſt Way. And till they have tried to obtain ſuch a Liberty, and been ſolemnly refuſed it, I think it is to no purpoſe for them to pretend that their Mouths are ſtopped by the Laws of the Country. For they may argue without Spleen and ſcurrilous Reflections; and no impartial Perſon would be angry, to ſee Men fairly endeavouring after a ſatisfactory Reſolution of their Doubts, in a Caſe wherein their Eternal Happineſs was ſo nearly concerned.

May Your Lordſhip long continue an Ornament and Support to True Religion and Uſeful Learning, the ſure Friend of the Poor and Diſtreſſed, and a vigorous Promoter of all that concerns the Intereſt and Glory of your Country.

And

And may the Church of *England* ever have, as it has now, ſuch Paſtors at the Head of it, whoſe chief Ambition it ſhall be to imitate the ſublime Example of the *Great Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls.* I am,

My LORD,

With all humble and ſincere Reſpect,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Moſt Obedient, and

Devoted Servant,

HUMPHRY DITTON.

PREFACE
TO THE
READER.

AFTER *I had reſolved upon this Undertaking, and thrown the* Materials *of which it was to conſiſt into ſome* Order *and* Method; *the next thing was to conſider in* what ſort of Form and Dreſs *it would be moſt advantageous to preſent it to the World: Whether I ſhould proceed all along in ſo very ſtrict and abſtracted a Way, as to ſay nothing but what ſhould be either* Lemma, Propoſition, Scholium, *or* Corollary; *or elſe ſhould take the agreeable Liberty of mixing the* Declamatory *with the* ſtrict *Way of Reaſoning, in ſuch Parts of the Diſcourſe where it ſhould be to ſome good and uſeful Purpoſe ſo to do.*

And I quickly concluded, that the latter *Method would be the moſt uſeful and advantageous in a Deſign of this Nature. For as all thoſe who are Judges of ſound Argument and Reaſon would as eaſily find it out, and trace it thro' all the parts of a diſcourſe compoſed after this manner, as if all was put into the* ſevereſt and moſt rigorous Mathematical Form *that could be; ſo the doing of it that way, would infallibly have given it ſuch a frightful and forbidding look, that my main end and ſcope in the publica-*

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tion of it muſt neceſſarily have been loſt, with reſpect to the greateſt part of our Readers. The Deſign I propoſed to myſelf was, to examine and enquire into the Truth of this very important Doctrine. The Reſurrection of JESUS CHRIST, *in a* ſtrict *and* accurate Way; *and, at the ſame time, to render that Enquiry* truly uſeful to all Perſons whatſoever. *And this end I could never have obtained, had I tied myſelf up to the ſtrict form of* Propoſition, Lemma, *&c. in every particular thing I had occaſion to ſay. For as the* Nature and Uſe of thoſe Things are known but to very few people, *comparatively ſpeaking; ſo when a Man is wholly confined to them, there is many an opportunity loſt of* urging and preſſing an Argument home, *and making ſuch Applications of it, as tend much more to the enforcing it on the Mind, than the bare propoſing of it in a* Theorematical Way *ever will or can do.*

Every judicious and intelligent Perſon knows, that ſtrict Reaſoning itſelf, *and the* ſtrict Form of Reaſoning, *are two very different things. They do by no means neceſſarily ſuppoſe or infer one another.* Strict Reaſoning *may as well be without the* Form, *as the* Form *is often without the juſt Conſequence and Connection of Parts, which alone makes it* ſtrict Reaſoning. *A* Declamatory *Diſcourſe may be ſo ſet together, that by a mere change of the dreſs it ſhall become a* rigorous Demonſtration. *As on the other hand, the* latter, *taken out of the ſeverities of its own proper Form, may be made to appear with all the ſoft and pleaſant Airs of a Declamation, and yet at the ſame time preſerve the chain of ſolid Argument and Truth ſtrict and entire.* *In*

In the following Diſcourſe I have made it my buſineſs to examine that great and fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Faith, which is the ſubject of it, with the ſame Impartiality and Care that I would have done had I not believed it at all, but been only an indifferent and unconcern'd Perſon, *neither prejudiced on one ſide in favour of it, nor on the other with wrong notions and diſlike. Upon this ſcore I have not any where ſcrupled to make what Conceſſions appeared to me to be intrinſecally juſt and reaſonable, and agreeable to Truth and Matter of Fact. I have no where induſtriouſly ſtifled or ſuppreſſed any Objections of the adverſe Party which I was conſcious of, and really believed to deſerve Notice. And as I have not concealed any Part of their Strength, to make them appear* weaker than they are; *ſo neither have I repreſented any Part of their Strength to a Diſadvantage, or ſet their Reaſonings in a falſe Light, with a Deſign to make them appear* worſe Reaſoners than they are. *I have made uſe of no arbitrary, precarious Hypotheſes to build or eſtabliſh any Concluſions upon; but, on the other hand, having ſtudiouſly avoided arguing upon any ſuch Topicks as are really doubtful and queſtionable, and endeavoured all along to keep cloſely to theſe two, as my* main Foundations, *viz.* Plain Matter of Fact, and the Laws and Conſtitution of Human Nature. *And whatever Conſequences I have drawn, either againſt the* Deiſts, *or in favour of the* Chriſtians, *I have drawn them only there, where, according to the beſt of my Judgment, the eternal Laws of Nature and Reaſon obliged me ſo to do; and that without any forcing or ſtraining of Things be-*

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yond thoſe Bounds, to which the genuine Scope and Extent of the Principles I argue from would allow me to carry them.

And for the Proof of this fair and equal Management, I appeal to the Book itſelf. They that will take the Pains to examine that *with unprejudiced Judgment and Care, I am ſure will acquit me; and they that will not do ſo, cannot condemn me without fixing a Reproach upon themſelves. I have no more of any ſort of Motives to biaſs me to miſrepreſent and ſet things in a wrong Light, than I have Intereſt to keep me from owning Truth when it is evidently made out to me. And, therefore, I deſire no better Quarter than this,* That the Book be read, and maturely conſider'd. *Nor am I under Apprehenſions of any thing ſo much as I am of* Ignorance, *and* raſh and haſty Judging.

In the mean time I will offer a few Things to the Conſideration of thoſe Perſons who, being Unbelievers of the Doctrine *here aſſerted, may probably read this Diſcourſe with Prejudices, and perhaps with a Deſign of quarrelling and contending.*

I deſire them, therefore, to take Notice in the firſt Place, That towards the Cloſe of PART III. after I have ſummed up all the Evidence, and concluded from thence the certain Truth of the Fact of our Saviour's Reſurrection; *I have likewiſe* enumerated all the poſſible juſt Ways by which they can proceed to attack the Argument, in order to ſhew that it does not conclude rightly and truly: *By which means I have both ſhortened their Labour, in giving*

ing them a general View of all the Methods of oppoſing me (that ſo they may chuſe which they think the moſt effectual) and alſo ſhewn how ready and willing I am to bring this Point to an Iſſue with them, in a rational and ſober way, if they think fit ſo to do.

Another thing is, I muſt deſire they will always remember to diſtinguiſh between the Argument itſelf, and any Mode or Circumſtance, of what Kind or Nature ſoever it be, which has not a direct and neceſſary Dependance upon, or which does not properly and immediately influence the Concluſion. *The* Second *and* Third PARTS *of the Book are but one entire Chain of Reaſoning; the* former *being only the* General Premiſes, *which the* latter *concludes from. If they can find any Defect or Flaw in the* Reaſoning *that will make the* Concluſion *to be unjuſt and wrong, then they gain their Point: If not, as I never loved diſputing upon trifling and frivolous Matters, ſo they who have* Time *and* Temper *for ſuch mean Exerciſes, ſhall, for me, engage in them by themſelves.*

Again, I expect likewiſe, That whatever they have to propoſe at any Time, be propoſed in an accurate, diſtinct, and methodical Way: *That they offer no precarious* Surmiſes *and* Conjectures, *no mere* Criticiſms, *no* Similies *or* Illuſtrations, *inſtead of plain downright* Argument. *But that they oblige themſelves to the Buſineſs of* Reaſoning, *and not of making* Flouriſhes: *And that when they have once fixed upon a Point, they be ſure to run it to a head; and not leave it inglorioufly, for a Subject of future Animadverſions.*

I will not ſo much as offer at an Apology *for a Book of this Kind, conſidering the preſent State of Things in the Chriſtian World. What is talked of more, and believed leſs, than the Doctrine here propoſed? We call* Jeſus Chriſt *Lord and Saviour, we repeat the Articles of the* Creed, *and bow at His Name, with an hundred more ſuch like Inſtances of outſide Reverence and Devotion, when at the ſame time there are Multitudes amongſt us that are ſo far from either adoring his Perſon, or believing his Goſpel, that it is a Queſtion whether the worſt Enemies he has in the World can outdo us in the heinous Contempt of both. The* Profeſſion *of Chriſtianity is, for the moſt part, nothing but mere Pageantry; and People take it upon them out of a Compliment to their Country and to be civil to the Government under which they live.*

To call all Revealed Religion *into queſtion, is now-a-days almoſt as neceſſary a Step towards the compleating of a* Gentleman, *as nice Breeding and Behaviour, or a good Dreſs. And he that cannot, at leaſt, doubt and demur whether the* Prophets *and* Apoſtles *were not mere deluded Enthuſiaſts, or wicked deſigning Impoſtors; makes as ill a Figure in a genteel modiſh Company, as he who wears a Habit that has been out of uſe for two or three Centuries. A Wretch that can ſcarce hammer out the Senſe of an Author of the loweſt Claſs, perhaps even in his own native Tongue, ſets up now-a-days for a* Critick *upon the Goſpel; and every* little Tyro, *that is juſt advancing to his firſt Degree in* Mathematicks, *thinks he is able to* demonſtrate *all to be a Cheat. But ſurely, if the Great Maſters and*

Patrons

Patrons of Deiſm, *who were better furniſhed for all the Purpoſes of* Argument *and* Enquiry, *could never carry their Oppoſitions to* Chriſtianity *higher than impotent Slander and Reproach: This inferiour Train of* raw unexperienced Diſciples (*who, whatever they have to ſay, can never pretend that their* Reaſon *and* Philoſophy *are affronted) ought never to attack Religion in inſolent and poſitive Terms; but, tho' it were out of mere Complaiſance and Regard to the Examples of their* Teachers, *ſhould be contented to make their Efforts againſt* Chriſtianity, *in a* Way more worthy of themſelves, *and let all Pretences to* Argument *and* Reaſon *alone. Scarce ever was any Age ſo degenerate as ours, wherein People get* Intereſt, Favour, Credit, *nay even a bare* Livelihood *and* Subſiſtance *(as ſome of our exploded* Itinerant Deiſts *have done) and all this upon the pure Merits of* Infidelity.

But the Cure of all theſe Diſorders we muſt leave to the Care and good Providence of GOD Almighty.

While the Publication *of this Book has been deferred hro' many unforeſeen Interruptions and Avocations, I have been ſurprized ſometimes to find how indiſcreetly ſome Perſons, who pretend to ſtand by the Doctrine here aſſerted, have talked of an Undertaking of this Nature. However, I can certify the Reader, that to the beſt of my Knowledge they were only ſuch to whom I was vaſtly more indebted for their* Diſlike, *than I ſhould have ever been for their* Approbation, *had they been any thing* buſy *in telling the World how much they either approved the Deſign, or valued the Author.*

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There have not been thoſe wanting who have been ſo wiſe as to think I muſt rather betray, *than* vindicate *the doctrine of the* Reſurrection; *becauſe I do not prove it all along from the* New Teſtament *as a* Divine Revelation. *And one particularly (who ought to have known better things) could not poſſibly beat it out of his head, but the* Reſurrection was actually to be demonſtrated by Lines and Figures; *I ſuppoſe, becauſe he had met with ſuch unlucky hard words as* Scholium, Corollary, *&c. in the* printed Propoſals: *And did therefore very gravely declare, that it was a ſhame an Article of the Chriſtian Faith, and one of ſuch conſequence too, ſhould ever be treated after ſuch a manner. And tho' Perſons thus raſh are ſeldom much addicted to* bluſhing, *yet I will not put it to the trial whether they can or no, by telling them* who, *and* what ſort of Perſons, *have been of a very different Opinion from them, not only as to the* Deſign, *but the* Performance *too.*

As for my own part, as I had nothing but the Service and Advantage of a Cauſe of moſt important Truth *in view, and which I was fully certain could never ſuffer by being ſet in the cleareſt Light that could be; ſo having taken ſome Pains to do ſo, I have Hopes that this Treatiſe may be of ſome Uſe to* Knowing, Candid *and* Unprejudiced Readers *of all Sorts; and that they may find ſome important Points relating to* NATURAL RELIGION *ſettled to their Satisfaction in the* APPENDIX, *as well as that great One of* REVEALED RELIGION *in the* BODY of the BOOK.

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THE

DEIST's Concern

To enquire into the

TRUTH

OF

Chriſt's Reſurrection.

PART I.

The CONTENTS.

The Argument for the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion drawn from the Reſurrection of JESUS CHRIST *propoſed and conſidered.*

What Treatment the Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection has met with in the World.

The Caſe between the Chriſtians *and* Deiſts *fairly and fully ſtated.*

The Conſequences of the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, as they affect each Party.

SECT. I.

HE that well conſiders the Force of thoſe Arguments which are brought to eſtabliſh the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*; that ſees how they all (tho' drawn from different Topicks) conſpire in the moſt perfect manner to convince the World of the divine Original of this Faith; would ſcarce think it poſſible, that the Reaſon and Underſtanding of Mankind ſhould ever oppoſe it; will therefore conclude there is ſomething more than pure Infidelity at the bottom, and that they are not mere Scruples of the Mind which create ſo long and violent Contention.

If he thinks on the Excellency of the Precepts of the *Chriſtian Religion*, he finds them of the fitteſt Nature poſſible to perſuade him to receive it as the Contrivance of Heaven: They are all ſo worthy of God, ſo beneficial and improving to Human Nature, and ſo conducive to the Welfare and Happineſs of Society.

When he conſiders the ſtrange and ſpeedy Propagation of this Faith thro' the World, with its Triumph over the Wit and Policy, the Force and Malice of its formidable enemies; and all this accompliſhed by ſuch methods, as the Reaſon of Mankind would have pronounced the moſt fooliſh and abſurd: He ſees here the over-ruling Hand of God, which alone could give it ſuch aſtoniſhing Succeſſes; by thoſe very Ways and Means from which its utter Confuſion was to be expected.

The exact Accompliſhment of expreſs and unqueſtionable Prophecies, concerning the moſt remarkable Events of the World, is a ſolemn appeal to all reaſonable Nature, whether

whether that Revelation be not truly Divine, which contains ſuch plain and wonderful Predictions.

Laſtly, The Miracles wrought by *Chriſt Jeſus* and his *Apoſtles*, in Confirmation of this Faith and Doctrine, are ſuch Proofs of the near Concern which Heaven had therein; that he who conſiders them, and at the ſame time calls *Chriſtianity* an Impoſture, muſt either take Pains to avoid knowing the Finger of God, when he ſees it, or elſe do infinitely worſe, by aſcribing the manifeſt Effects thereof to mean Artifice, or diabolical Power.

From theſe Topicks the Truth of *Chriſtianity* has been ſo ſubſtantially argued, and ſo clearly proved; that by all the Rules of right Reaſon in uſe amongſt Mankind, it is rendered plainly abſurd and irrational to reject it. One need not wiſh to ſee an adverſary reduced to worſe extremities, than one of theſe arguments well managed and preſſed home would reduce him to; provided he were kept from Excurſions, and obliged to return no anſwers but what were directly to the purpoſe.

Sect. II.

HOwever, waving all theſe, as being more commonly and largely handled already, I ſhall at preſent make choice of another argument to eſtabliſh the Divine Authority of the *Chriſtian Religion*, (one which will, with ſome particular advantages, anſwer the deſign I propoſe to myſelf in making uſe of it) and that is, *The Reſurrection of* Jesus Christ, *the Author of this Religion in the World.*

This is the great *Doctrine of Chriſtianity*, which ſerves as a foundation to all the reſt; and from which alone indeed, the truth of all the reſt may be inferred.

If this article be taken from a *Chriſtian*, he will find no difficulty in parting with any other you ſhall ask of him, Of ſo great importance is it to his preſent comfort

and ſatisfaction, and to his future happineſs, both in ſoul and body.

I am very ſenſible how ridiculous a Topick this is, in the opinions of thoſe Gentlemen (the *Deiſts*) with whom I am now concern'd. Tho' few articles of the *Chriſtian Faith* meet with any ſuch treatment from them, as may be call'd civil; yet *this* is treated with a particular ſeverity: And whatever eſcapes them, this is ſure to have no quarter, in their *free diſcourſes and converſations* about *Religion*. My buſineſs here being to argue with them, and not to make reflections on their *conduct*; I ſhall content myſelf with only obſerving two things.

Firſt, That beſides the poſſible danger of taking ſuch liberties with a doctrine of ſuch grand Conſequence to them, as well as to us; beſides the indiſcretion and ill-breeding of expoſing, in terms ſo very malignant and invidious (as they do ſometimes) that which the country they live in owns as a *fundamental article of its faith*, and which many men, of no leſs wiſdom and ſagacity than theſe Gentlemen, do lay the whole *ſtreſs of their ſalvation upon*: Beſides all this, I ſay, there is a point of honour to be conſidered, which one would think, ſhould bear ſome ſway, and prevail with them to take thoſe meaſures, which prudence, and a ſenſe of decency cannot. For theſe Gentlemen would do well to remember, that as free as they are of their *Satyr* and *Invectives*, they have hitherto been extremely ſparing of their arguments. It is with ſo much caution that they conceal, and keep all kinds of reaſoning to themſelves, that nothing ſhort of *Chriſtian Charity* (which always thinks the beſt) can poſſibly be genteel and good-natur'd enough, to pay them the compliment of believing, they have arguments as well as raillery, to aſſault *Chriſtianity* withal. Now, I ſay, it is ungenerous to play upon a ſubject with wit (as ſome people very guiltily call it) when it demands a fair trial by reaſon and argument. It looks but poorly for men to ſtand at a diſtance pelting religion with little *Jeſts* and

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Reflections; when they have liberty to come up as close as they please, and end the dispute in a more honourable way.

For where men discover spleen and a hearty concern in opposing a cause, those that stand by will naturally conclude, since they see them in earnest, that they exert their best strength, and do as much mischief as they can.

But then another consideration, which I think very much lessens the honour of this way of proceeding, is, that all the wit that serves to expose religion, is so scandalously cheap, and costs a man so very little. I don't say, but it may possibly cost the authors of it dearer hereafter; but what I intend is, that it is not a very chargeable thing at present, since a little of it, with such good and frugal management as they commonly bestow on it, will go a great way.

For let these gentlemen but consider, that as mens vicious lives do too commonly make it their interest and concern, that the *Christian Religion* should be a cheat; so they are extremely ready and willing to believe it is really so: And when once a subject is nicely suted to peoples humours and inclinations, there needs not abundance of wit to make a discourse of it very palatable, and bring the speaker off with reputation and applause. The mirth and pleasure of the unthinking part of Mankind (which is by far the greatest part) is almost as blind and mechanical, as the very motion of a piece of Clock-work. They are stirr'd and *delighted*; tho' they scarce know *with* what, or *for* what cause, or *to* what end and purpose. But if you strike them, they move as other Matter does; and that too, as long as the Impulse lasts: especially if the string of Religion be touched something roughly by the hand of an enemy; wicked Nature, or Prejudice, like a *Chord in Unison*, presently dances to the Motion, and returns the same Sound. Men, whose Understandings are otherwise dull enough, can feel by a sort of sympathetick Pleasure when *Christianity* is insulted and abused; and per-

ceive a rude jeſt paſs'd upon the preachers of the goſpel, tho' they don't know *Satyr* from *Complement*, upon another occaſion. And ſo great is the power of prejudice and averſion, even in ſome who are maſters of more reaſon and ſagacity than the common ſort, that *manifeſt Sophiſtry* frequently goes down with them for *demonſtration*; and the moſt *inſipid things*, when levelled at Religion, paſs for *Beauties and delicate turns of Thought*.

Now theſe are but poor triumphs; becauſe it is not to the reaſon and underſtanding of mankind, but to their paſſions and appetites, which are pre-ingag'd againſt Religion, that all this talk is addreſſed. Reaſon is a nice and ſcrupulous thing, and will be pleaſed with nothing but what is ſolid and juſt; but paſſion and prejudice ſwallow every thing that is offer'd, and you can't avoid gratifying them, provided you conſult their bent and tendency, and do but fall in with them in the way that they go. But then, as there is ſome Satisfaction and Glory, in pleaſing the *noble rational Part* of a Man; ſo methinks to ſooth and flatter the *brutal Part*, ſhould be ſcorn'd and deſpis'd. A Man that conſiders things well, would much ſooner take it as a heinous Affront to be charged with ſaying ſuch fine things as theſe are; than think it a Credit to him, for other People to ſay, that he was the Author of them. However, as the caſe ſtands, it is no great wonder that ſo many who ſet up againſt *Chriſtianity*, get the Reputation of being Wits. The Price of the Character is not ſo dear, but we may ſuppoſe multitudes able enough to lay it down. Yet it would mortify a thoughtful Man to conſider, that he ſhould be beholden to the Vices and Follies of Mankind for a Reputation, and not to Judgment and ſober Senſe; and that better Judges would very much queſtion his Underſtanding, upon the ſcore of thoſe very things which procure him the Name of a Wit, amongſt People who either cannot contradict him, or are ſo devoted to him by a blind implicit Faith, that they could vouch for the Truth of what he ſays, even before he ſpeaks it.

Secondly,

Secondly, It may be farther obſerved, *That this way of aſſaulting Chriſtianity, is not at all a new thing.* The *modern Deiſts* may perhaps have improv'd it conſiderably; however, their Predeceſſors in the more early Ages of *Chriſtianity*, managed the Controverſy much after the ſame manner. They bantered the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection*, purſued it with * Scoffs and Laughter, inſtead of fair Reaſonings againſt the Credibility of it. They did not think it enough to deny it themſelves, but they endeavoured to render it as infamous to all the World as they could: And therefore loaded it with the opprobrious Names of † *Abſurd*, *Abominable*, and *Impoſſible:* As if a Torrent of hard Words and Reproaches, without any Arguments, had been ſufficient to bear down all the Credit of the Doctrine; and perſuade thoſe who had believed it, to treat it with the ſame Contempt, that the profeſſed Enemies of it did.

I am ſenſible, that in the laſt mentioned Paſſage out of *Origen*, the Criminator *Celſus* brings in ſome *Chriſtians*, as aſperſing the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* in theſe vile Terms; and makes them talk after this manner of the grand fundamental Article of their own Religion. But this being ſo far from all Probability, and only aſſerted in general Terms, without particular Proof; and beſides, the very Notion of a *Reſurrection* being, in the ſame place, ſo abominably miſrepreſented and perverted into quite another Senſe, than the *Chriſtians* ever took it in: it is plain, that this was *Celſus*'s his own calumny; or at leaſt it was what other Enemies (as inveterate, and as little converſant in what they oppoſe, as he was) had vented, to render the Doctrine contemptible amongſt Mankind.

Nor were they more ſparing of their Invective againſt that of the *Reſurrection* of *Jeſus Chriſt* in particular. And

* Μυσίαων γελάσιμον ἢ ἀπίστων. Orig.
† Ἀπίθανον ἅμα καὶ ἀδύνατον. Celſ. apud Orig. Lib. 5. *Pag.* (mihi) 240.

therefore they repreſented the whole Scene, as mere *Illuſion* and *Dream*; and thoſe who believed it, as Perſons poſſeſſed with a phanatical Fury, or under the Power of ſome magical Incantation.

The Appearances of *Chriſt* after his *Reſurrection*, they compared to thoſe of * *Spectres* and *Apparitions*, which, how much ſoever believed by the Vulgar, were notwithſtanding only the diverſion of thoſe, who had the Character of being wiſe and ſenſible Men. And ſo they expoſed the Diſciples, who affirmed they had ſeen and converſed with *Jeſus Chriſt*; if not as wilful Liars and Impoſtors, yet as weak crazy people; that made a noiſe of ſtrange things, which had no Exiſtence but in their own Imaginations.

And theſe are ſome of the ſame things, which our *modern Deiſts* ſay now. But Reproaches and precarious Aſſertions, are, as I ſaid before, of all the arguments in the world, the leaſt expenſive, both to thoſe who oppoſe, and thoſe who defend a cauſe.

Now the *uſe* which, I think, we may juſtly make of ſo *early* an oppoſition to *Chriſtianity* carried on after this manner; is very conſiderable, and ought not to be paſs'd by without notice. For did the enemies content themſelves with bare ſcolding and railing *at that time of the day?* Did they go this way to work, when the religion was ſo *young*, when the main matter of fact was *new and freſh in the world*, when it was ſo eaſy to trace things, and run them up to a head, by careful and accurate enquiries? Was this all they thought fit to do ſo near the *very time*, and, as I may ſay, upon the *very ſpot*, when all Mankind were full of the diſcourſe, and the thing lay open to every body's Examination; when the learned *Greek* and the invidious *Jew*,

* Κοινοποιεῖν πρὸς ἕτερα φαντάσματα, καὶ ἄλλους φαντάσθοντας, τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ τοὺς ἰδόντας αὐτὸν, μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν. Celſ. apud Orig. *lib.* 5. *pag.* 98.

might

might both have had their fill of ſearching, and the World would have thank'd them for the Diſcovery of the Impoſture? What, I pray, could this be the Effect of, *but only their having nothing elſe to ſay?* For would they have ſpared *Chriſtianity*, had it lain at their Mercy? Did they ſhew ſuch a Fondneſs for it by all their unwearied Malice and Calumny, that they would have forborn telling *dangerous Truth*, out of a concern for its Reputation? One ſubſtantial Argument that ſhould fairly have ſhewn that our Saviour's Miracles and Reſurrection were nothing but mere Juggle, and the Apoſtles a Company of Impoſtors, would have done the Buſineſs. Nay, an Argument that ſhould, upon ſolid and rational Grounds, but have made out a *juſt Suſpicion* to Mankind, that they were Cheats; would have done it to incomparably more Advantage, than all the falſe *Philoſophy*, the bad *Logick*, and the worſt *Rhetorick*, that *Celſus*, *Porphyry*, *Julian*, or any of that Tribe employed againſt *Chriſtianity*, ever did, or could poſſibly do. And therefore, I ſay, it is one good Confirmation of the Faith of a *Chriſtian*, That the worſt Enemies, *in thoſe times when they ſhould and might have ſaid moſt*, ſaid only that which made it plain to all the World, that they had *nothing to the purpoſe* to ſay.

Sect. III.

HAVING premiſed theſe things, I ſhall now proceed to obſerve; That this Argument drawn from the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, as it is *conciſe*, and brings the whole Controverſy into a very *ſmall compaſs*; ſo it is very *poſitive* and *decretory*; and will ſo fully determine it, that there will be no room left for any farther Diſpute. To evince this, and at the ſame time to perſuade each of the contending Parties to examine, with the utmoſt Care, a Doctrine which ſo nearly concerns them; I ſhall here enumerate thoſe Conſequences, which will affect

affect either the *Chriſtians* or the *Deiſts*, according as we ſuppoſe the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* to be either *true* or *falſe*. I am willing to put it both ways, that I may proceed in every ſtep of this great Enquiry, in ſo fair and impartial a manner, that the Gentlemen of the contrary Opinion may have no juſt Reaſon to object any thing of unequal Proceeding, or a voluntary ſly Concealment of what may ſeem to make for the Diſadvantage of the *Chriſtian Cauſe*. I declare, that I know of no danger *Chriſtianity* is in, by any Freedom which can be uſed, conſiſtent with Truth and Juſtice: If I did, I would abandon the Profeſſion it. For no *Religion which is Divine* can ever poſſibly need *Falſhood* and *Deceit* to ſupport it. Falſe Colours and pious Frauds, may poſſibly be very uſeful or needful in the management of ſome Religions, that are, or have been in the World; which, without ſuch Helps, would diſcover themſelves too far, to attract the Zeal and Devotion of Mankind any longer. The Poet tells us, that ſuch Services as theſe were * acceptable to his *Jupiter*; and there would be a time, when the Doers of them would be † rewarded.

But *Chriſtianity* neither needs or encourages any ſuch Methods, nor would the Author of it think himſelf ſerved by them. As his Religion is all plain and ſincere, ſo it needs nothing but Truth to defend it. I ſhall therefore not ſcruple at any time to make ſuch Conceſſions, be they what they will, as Juſtice, Truth, and right Reaſon require ſhould be made,

* Ἀπάτης δικαίας οὐκ ἀποστατεῖ ΘΕΟΣ.

† Ψευδῶν δὲ καιρὸν ἔσθ' ὅποι τιμῇ ΘΕΟΣ, Æſchyl. Vid. Opuſcul. Mytholog. D. Gale. *Pag.* 720.

SECT. IV.

Sect. IV.

If the Reſurrection of Jesus Christ *be a Truth: Then it follows.*

Firſt, *With reſpect to the* Chriſtians;

(1.) That the great diſpute concerning the Divine Authority of the *Chriſtian Religion*, muſt be decided entirely in favour of them. For if *Chriſt* roſe from the dead, then he was a perſon ſent from *God*, to do that work in the World, which he pretended he came about: Becauſe the Majeſty of Heaven would never have given an impoſtor ſo glorious Credentials, as a *Reſurrection from the dead*; a work which nothing but *Omnipotency* could poſſibly accompliſh. For this would have been to have ſet his *own Seal* to the deluſion, and have made it paſs for credible amongſt mankind, by the *Authority of Heaven.*

If *Jeſus Chriſt* had a *Divine Miſſion*, then all *his Doctrine is true*, and *his Laws obligatory to Mankind*, where they are promulged and known. For a *Miniſter from Heaven*, who muſt needs be a Perſon of *perfect Sincerity and Truth*, could not poſſibly teach or impoſe any thing on mankind, but *what ſhould be exactly agreeable to the Mind and Will of Him* that ſent him.

(2.) *All the promiſes of the Goſpel*, relating to the Enjoyments and Bleſſings of a future life, *will certainly be fulfilled to them.* For the ſure and certain performance of thoſe promiſes, will be inferred from the *Sincerity* and *Veracity* of him who made them: And he being (by the *Hypotheſis*, or what follows from it) a *perſon ſent from God*; it is plain, that whatever he has ſaid, may be *depended upon and truſted to*, as certain to come to paſs.

(3.) From whence it follows, that the *Chriſtians* are not only *perfectly ſecure*, in ſubmitting to the Laws and Inſtitutions of *Jeſus Chriſt*; but they are alſo the *wiſeſt men in the world* in ſo doing, becauſe, whatever inconveniences

veniencies and honourable and faithful diſcharge of their Duty may be attended with at preſent; they are ſure of an abundant Recompence in a *future State*, where deſpiſed or oppreſſed *Virtue* and *Piety* will be crown'd with all thoſe Rewards, which are now promiſed in the Goſpel. In a word, the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* is a complete Security to all *good Chriſtians*, for the enjoyment of ſuch Privileges as are by far too great for all our Conceptions in this World, and therefore much more beyond *Deſcription*.

Secondly, *with Reſpect to the* Deiſts.

(1.) They do not only *loſe their Argument and their Cauſe*, but are in danger alſo of loſing *eternal Happineſs in the next World*. Becauſe, while they perſiſt in their Infidelity, they ſtand liable to all the Threatnings which the Goſpel denounces againſt the finally impenitent deſpiſers of it; and which muſt, upon this *Hypotheſis*, as certainly be executed, as the Promiſes be fulfill'd. And this they ought to take notice of, that *Jeſus Chriſt* has not been more liberal in his Promiſes of *inconceivable Happineſs* and *Bliſs* to all who ſincerely love and obey him; than he has been ſevere and poſitive in his Threatnings of *extreme Miſery* to thoſe who ſlight his Authority, and the Method of Salvation he has revealed.

I do not determine any thing here concerning the Goſpel, whether it be *Divine Truth, or mere Impoſture:* But this, I ſay, that ſince the Threatnings of it are denounced in ſo dreadful and poſitive a manner, as they are, Men ought to take care that they do not venture too far, and ſhould therefore think with themſelves, that the Matter we are enquiring into, deſerves the moſt ſerious Thoughts and Reflections they can poſſibly beſtow upon it.

(2.) Again, if the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* be certain; then in order to free themſelves from all this Danger, theſe Gentlemen will be obliged to receive the Doctrines of the Goſpel as *Divine Truths*, and ſubmit to the Laws and Injunctions of it; and therefore ſhould ſet themſelves with all the Zeal and Application they can, to throw off all thoſe

Prejudices

Prejudices and Averſions, which have hitherto hindered them from ſo doing.

They muſt leave off all their quibbling and diſputing, and take whatever they find plainly reveal'd in the Goſpel; remembring, *That tho infinite wiſdom and goodneſs can never poſſibly oblige them to believe any thing that is really abſurd and contradictory, or do any thing which is unreaſonable; yet they may be obliged to believe and practiſe many things, which unconquered prejudice may tell them are abſurd and unreaſonable, and which they may think to be ſo, by uſing themſelves to judge of the ways of God too much by* human rules and meaſures.

Theſe inferences, I hope, will be allowed to be juſt and good, upon the *Hypotheſis*, that *the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt is a certain Truth.*

Sect. V.

NOW from hence follows this *Corollary*: That ſince the danger theſe Gentlemen are in, upon the *Hypotheſis of the Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection*, is ſo very great; they muſt either have very clear and convincing proofs *to themſelves*, that that Doctrine is neither true, nor even *probably and likely* to be true; or elſe the peace which they enjoy under an uncertainty about that matter, is not the *peace of wiſe men.* The reaſon is, becauſe otherwiſe their eaſe and quiet have no foundation that is truly rational to ſupport them.

The peace which wiſe men enjoy, is a quiet and compoſed temper of mind, reſulting from mature thought, and a ſerious conſideration of circumſtances. When all accounts being carefully ballanced, and things duly compared on every ſide, a man finds nothing that ſticks, ſufficient to raiſe a juſt ſcruple, or cauſe any degree of pain or remorſe; this is a rational repoſe: And whatever quiet proceeds not from this cauſe, deſerves no better name

Name than that of *Mechanical*; as owing its riſe either to ignorance, or contempt of danger, or to ſome arts and management of the body, uſed to divert the mind from the ſenſe of it. But how wretched a ſhift is this! Men muſt be very hard put to it indeed, when things are brought to that paſs, that their eaſe and quiet muſt be the mere effect of a voluntary incapacity to judge of the reaſons they have to be uneaſy. Methinks a man who manages himſelf after this manner, is in no better a Caſe than he whom the power of wine has thrown into a ſound ſleep on the top of a precipice; who is ſecure for no other reaſon, but that he has loſt his ſenſes. It is not difficult for men, by tampering with the *Machine*, to induce a fatal *Stupor* or *Liſtleſſneſs* upon their minds, and ſo bring themſelves into a *pleaſing Inſenſibility* of all things that tend to frighten or diſturb them, tho' they are the moſt neceſſary in the World to be thought of: So a guilty malefactor, by the charms of an *Opiate*, forgets the horrors of an *Execution-day*, and enjoys all the pleaſures of a fool's paradiſe, till death comes to awaken him.

But who reckons ſuch a one any other than deſperate, in all the falſe pleaſures he enjoys? Or who thinks it a rational repoſe, for a man in any circumſtance whatſoever, to baniſh Thought and Fear, and give himſelf up to Mirth, and Diverſion, when his caſe is doubtful, and there is but a chance for his eſcaping ſome fearful calamity, which may ſurprize him the next hour?

And I cannot ſee, but that the gentlemen, who reject the *Chriſtian Revelation*, are very liable to be charged with the ſame ſort of folly (tho' in a caſe of infinitely greater danger, than any that can happen in the preſent world) unleſs they are able to prove, *to the entire ſatisfaction of their own minds*, that there is no truth in this *hiſtory of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*: For if it be true, they know what follows, if they perſiſt in their infidelity to the laſt. And if they have reaſons to prove it not true, and ſuch as will bear examination; it is matter of ſome wonder they were

were never fairly propoſed, and made out: becauſe this might have been done with much leſs Offence to the World, and diſparagement to themſelves, than what thoſe bad Methods they have made uſe of, inſtead of Argument, have been the juſt occaſions of. If they have affronted the Religion of their Country with *Impunity*; they might have reaſoned ſoberly like Men deſirous of Truth, and willing to be rightly informed) with as little danger. Since therefore the Subject is of ſo much Importance; ſince there have been ſo many Occaſions and Opportunities for arguing in the beſt manner upon it; ſince modeſt and fair Reaſonings would have been leſs obnoxious to Cenſure, and far more advantageous, with reſpect to the Conviction of others, than Banter and Raillery can ever be ſuppoſed to be: it is rational for any Man to conclude, *That they have no ſuch Reaſons, by which they can, with an entire Satisfaction, aſſure themſelves, that the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *is not true.* And this *Concluſion*, which now is highly rational, I hope to make undoubtedly certain, by thoſe Reaſons which I ſhall hereafter propoſe, in order to ſhew, that the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* is actually true.

But farther, I ſay, that if this *Doctrine* be but ever ſo little probable, theſe Gentlemen cannot be allowed a rational Eaſe and Repoſe in that Caſe neither. For ſo far forth as this is probable, it is alſo probable, *That they are obnoxious to all the Puniſhments threatened to Unbelievers in the Goſpel.*

And is a bare probability of ſuch Danger to be born with any eaſe, by Men who are truly awake? Suppoſe a Man ſo far expoſed, that not only his Liberty and Fortune, but his very Life depended upon his concealment: Do you think that ſuch a perſon would lie free from Pain in a Place where it ſhould be ſaid to him, *Here you may be ſecure, but yet it is probable you may be taken?* Would not this wretched likelihood of a Diſcovery, produce anxious thoughts in the Breaſts of any of theſe Gentlemen themſelves,

ſelves, if this were their own Caſe? Would it not excite Fears and Cares, and paſſionate Deſires after a better and ſafer retreat? Nothing could be ſo agreeable to a Perſon in ſuch a Circumſtance, as a *Certainty of eſcaping*. And is Uncertainty a tolerable thing, when *Everlaſting Life and Felicity lie at ſtake?* Let but theſe Gentlemen intermit their Mirth and gay Thoughts for a few Moments, while they conſider how hard a Taſk they will have to prove, *That it is not at all probable, that the Hiſtory of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *is true*. The Difficulty is ſuch, that I dare venture to engage, whoever promiſes to go through with it, is not as good as his Word; and beſides runs into ſome manifeſt *Paralogiſm*, which his own common Notions and Opinions, in other matters, ſhall fairly convict him of.

I ſhall not prevent myſelf, by alledging any thing here, to evince the Probability of this *Doctrine*, which may afterwards be made uſe of, to much better purpoſe, to infer the certain Truth of it. It is ſufficient to have put theſe Gentlemen in mind of the Work incumbent on them; to free themſelves from the Imputation of paſſing their days here in the World in a blind mechanical Tranquillity. If they think that the ſame Argument I have uſed againſt *them*, may be as fairly turned againſt the *Chriſtians*, and ſhould therefore reaſon after this manner, *That if the* Reſurrection of Chriſt *ſhould not be true, the* Chriſtians *would be as much in Danger, as they ſhould be if it were true; and conſequently, can no more enjoy the Peace of wiſe Men, whilſt under an uncertainty about it, than they can be ſuppoſed to do in the other Caſe:*

I anſwer; Firſt, We ſhall ſee by the Sequel of this Diſcourſe, whether or no the *Chriſtians* have ſuch Proofs for the Truth of this *Doctrine*, as are ſufficient to make it ſtrictly juſt and rational for *them* to believe it. For if they have, then they may in the mean time enjoy the *Peace of wiſe Men.*

Secondly, I ſhall by and by conſider, in a very particular manner, that Danger which theſe Gentlemen object

to

to us, and bid us beware of, in caſe we are deceived in the matter of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*. And if it be ſo, that they are fully determined to draw no poſitive concluſions, but where they have plain and evident Principles to infer them from; I am in ſome hopes to preſent them with an Occaſion of putting ſo good a Reſolution in Practice, by deſpiſing this Objection for the time to come; as having no Foundations but what are perfectly arbitrary and precarious; and, to ſay all at once, being nothing but mere *Words* and *Sound*, without any *Force* or *Weight*.

We have hitherto conſidered the conſequence of the ſuppoſed Truth or Probability of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

I ſhall now *put the Caſe the other way*, and ſee what will follow, as fairly and truly, upon *that Suppoſition alſo*.

Sect. VI.

IF *the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *be not a Truth: Then it follows.*

Firſt, That the *whole Cauſe of Chriſtianity* is to be given up; as that which neither *deſerves*, nor is *capable* of any farther Defence.

For if that *Doctrine* (which is the Foundation on which all depends) be *falſe* and *deluſory*, all the reſt can be but Deluſion; and ſo may be parted with, without any ſcruple or difficulty at all. And therefore,

Secondly, as the *Deiſts* have nothing to fear from the Threatnings, ſo neither have the *Chriſtians* any thing to hope from the promiſes of the Goſpel: Becauſe neither Promiſes nor Threatnings can in this Caſe ſignify any thing, the whole Contexture being, by the *Hypotheſis*, a mere Impoſture.

Thirdly, Upon the preſent *Hypotheſis* it muſt be granted likewiſe, *That thoſe Perſons who reject the Chriſtian Revelation, are much wiſer and happier, in many reſpects, than thoſe who embrace it.*

To ſpeak of things according to the rules of ſtrict and impartial Reaſon; Wiſdom and Happineſs are not to be meaſured by *preſent Circumſtances and Appearances* but by the *laſt Iſſues or Reſults* of Things.

That is beſt, which ends beſt: He is the moſt prudent and happy Perſon, that provides the moſt durable Felicity for himſelf.

Now if the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* were certainly true, and the Goſpel conſequently a *Divine Revelation*, whoſe promiſes are all ſure to be fulfilled; then in whatever Circumſtances the *Chriſtians* are ſuppoſed to be in the preſent World, they would yet be the wiſeſt and happieſt of all Men. The happieſt, becauſe they would be in the way of receiving all thoſe glorious Rewards, which ſincere Faith and obedience are entitled to in a future State: And the wiſeſt, becauſe it would be an infinitely more juſt and rational Courſe to endure ſome preſent Inconveniences, and be obliged to the moſt laborious Duties, upon ſuch a Proſpect hereafter; than to hazard the loſs of a never-ending felicity, for the ſake of a ſhort-lived pleaſure, or ſome little freedom here in the World.

But if the *Doctrine* of the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, and the *Religion* founded thereon, be nothing but mere Cheat and Impoſture; and by conſequence there be no hopes nor proſpect of that tranſcendent Bliſs in the next World, which the *Chriſtians* make uſe of, to encourage themſelves to a chearful ſubmiſſion to all the Laws of the *Diſpenſation* they are under: Then, I think, it is evident, that in general they have a much harder Fate of it, than the Gentlemen on the other ſide; who by ſeeing through the Impoſture, and wiſely avoiding being caught by it, do by that means ſecure their Repoſe, and make themſelves perfectly eaſy, during the ſhort Period of Human Life.

For the Proof of this, let us conſider;

SECT. VII.

Sect. VII.

First, THE *Miseries and Sufferings of all sorts, attending the Profession of* Christianity *in the World.*

Our Saviour *Jesus Christ* (who deluded no Man by little Artifices into the Profession of his *Religion*) fairly told his Disciples at first, what they were to expect upon that account. He let them know in very plain and express Terms, that a sincere and stedfast Adherence to him, would cost them very dear, by drawing the Hatred and Malice of the whole World upon them. This we find in several places up and down in the *Gospels*. And the Apostles afterwards continued to inculcate the same thing in all their Sermons and Writings; declaring there was no worldly Gain or Reputation to be expected from the Profession and Practice of *Christianity*; but so far the contrary, *That all those who would live Godly in* Christ Jesus, *must suffer Persecution*. And we find accordingly, that these Predictions have been abundantly fulfilled; tho' the fulfilling of them has been as terrible, as it has been punctual and exact. Whatever could be accomplished by a Confederacy of such Passions, which, when they prevail, spread Confusion and Plagues amongst Mankind, and make the Earth a Picture of Hell; has been done against the Disciples of *Christ*. No sooner was *Christianity* planted, but the jealous World took the Alarm; stormed at the Encroachment, and set to the rooting of it out. All sorts of Men put their Hands to the Work, and made it their Business to render this Profession infamous and wretched to the last Degree. The Men of *Power and Grandeur* opposed it with open *Force and Violence*. The Men of *Wit and Learning* assaulted it in their own way: The *Philosophers* by crafty and subtle Disputations: The *Orators* by Harangues full of malicious Eloquence: The wise *Politicians* and *Statesmen*, by cruel and severe Decrees. So that what by one way and the other, what between the Persecutions of the *Sword* and the *Tongue*; it has

been the moſt deplorable Caſe in the World for a Man to be a *Chriſtian*. Indeed the latter of theſe two Perſecutions, tho' very grievous and troubleſome in itſelf, was yet never capable of producing ſuch frightful Effects as the *former*. *Sarcaſme and Reproach* are very great Trials of Mens Patience and Reſolution; but not near ſo great as *Tortures and Executions*. And here I may ſafely ſay, that Human Invention has ſcarce ever been ſo *luxuriant* in any one Inſtance, as in contriving ways to ſhed *Chriſtian Blood*. Nor would any Art be ſufficient to paint out Images of ſo much Horror in Colours that ſhould bear any tolerable Proportion to the Life. It is enough, and inſtead of all Deſcriptions, to ſay, *they ſuffered*. But oh! With what Charms of Meekneſs and good Temper, with what admirable Patience and Compoſedneſs of Mind? they ſoftned the Rage of their moſt ſavage Perſecutors by Prayers and Forgiveneſs: they rejoic'd in *Him for whoſe Name* they endured all, and concluded all their Triumphs in this World, with triumphing over Death itſelf.

All theſe things are ſo well known to be true, that there is no need of Authorities to ſupport what I ſay. A good part of the Hiſtory of 17 *Centuries*, is ſufficient Proof for it, and at hand for every one to conſult.

However, it may not be amiſs (for the ſake of thoſe, whoſe Faith goes no farther than a *Roman* or *Greek* Writer) to mention * *One*, who has ſpoke freely enough on this Subject, and I am ſure can never be ſuſpected of any thing of Partiality in favour of the *Chriſtians*. It is true, this Author, who, tho' an excellent *Hiſtorian*, plain enough ſhews himſelf to have been a Man of *Spleen* and *Paſſion*, repreſents the *Chriſtians* as a wicked and flagitious ſort of

* *Ergo abolendo Rumori NERO ſubdidit reos, & quæ fitiſſimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia inviſos Vulgus, CHRISTIANOS appellabat.—Et pereuntibus addita Ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti laniatu Canum interirent, aut Crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi defeciſſet dies, in uſum Nocturni Luminis urerentur.* Tacit. Annal. lib. 15. cap. 45.

People

People. But the Account he has given, in another † *part* of his Writings, concerning the *Jews*, and their Journey out of *Egypt*, under the Conduct of *Moſes*; is, I think, a ſufficient Proof, that his Word may well be queſtion'd, as to what he here reports of the *Chriſtians*.

Now this being the true State of their Caſe, one may eaſily conclude, that no Men endow'd with *common Senſe and Prudence*, or thoſe Principles of *Self-love and Preſervation* which Nature has put into all other Creatures, would ever render themſelves obnoxious to ſuch Miſeries as they have done, were it not upon the Proſpect of a future Recompence.

But where is this Reward, if the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection* be not true? It is this Doctrine which proves the Truth of the Goſpel, and ſecures the Performance of the Promiſes made therein. So that if *this* be a Deluſion, all is wrong; and the ſplendid Deſcriptions of a future Happineſs given there, to encourage Mankind to Patience and Conſtancy in Sufferings, are but Jeſt and Cheat, or mere enthuſiaſtical Amuſement. The Heaven of the *Chriſtians* is every whit as imaginary as that of the *Poets*; and on both ſides no more than *conceited Elyſian Shades and Groves*, if we are out in this Article of our *Chriſtian Faith*. How ſad a diſappointment then muſt thoſe Perſons meet with, who have undergone ſuch Calamities in this World, for the ſake of an Impoſture; and been led by the hopes of mere fancy'd Bliſs to make themſelves the moſt wretched of all Men?

To expect Salvation from one who is not a Saviour, and depend upon Rewards that ſhall never be beſtowed! To paſs the few Moments of Life in Pain and Sorrow, rejoicing in hope of a bright Scene of Glory, to make up for all in the next World; and then to find all vaniſh, and their beſt Expectations fruſtrated for ever! Who are deplorably unhappy, if theſe Perſons are not? And with

† *Tacit.* Hiſtor. Lib. 5.

what reaſon did St. *Paul*, a Writer whom the *Chriſtians* believe to be *divinely inſpired*, conclude, *That if in this Life only they have Hope in* CHRIST, *they are of all Men the moſt miſerable?*

It is true, the Scene is changed, and *Chriſtianity* is not now a-days that perſecuted thing it formerly was, being under the Protection and Encouragement of the Secular Powers. But what then? It is the ſame Religion ſtill, and there is the ſame Enmity in the World againſt it; and this Enmity would produce the very ſame Effects, if *He who ſtills the raging Sea, and bridles the Fury and Madneſs of the People*, did not ſet Bounds to it by his wiſe all-governing Providence. Farther, Thoſe who believe the Goſpel, are bound by a general Law to expect and prepare for Sufferings: Nor is any Man, whatever he pretends, a real Diſciple, of *Chriſt Jeſus*, till he has in ſome meaſure learnt that great Leſſon of *denying himſelf, taking up his Croſs and following him*, through what rugged or dangerous Way ſoever he ſhall be led.

And therefore, if we take all this into the Account, I cannot ſee but the Argument may very well be preſſed in the general: tho' the *Chriſtians* ſometimes live in Sunſhine, and enjoy the Smiles of the World.

SECT. VIII.

Secondly, AS the *Chriſtians*, by owning the Divine Authority of the Goſpel, are *thus expoſed*, ſo they are bound alſo to *perform all the Duties, and ſubmit to all the Diſcipline*, which the Goſpel enjoins: Whereas the *Deiſts* by their very Principles eſcape all this Toil and Labour, and keep themſelves free from any ſort of Impoſitions, that would clog and confine them in the preſent World.

As much Wiſdom and true Reaſon as there is in the *Chriſtian Inſtitution*, which would effectually recommend it

to

to all that ſhould examine it with *unprejudiced* Judgment and Care; yet it is no wonder that it appears ſo hard and ſevere to the greateſt part of the World, who look ſuperficially into it, and never conſider whither its grand Deſign and Tendency is.

The Laws of *Chriſt Jeſus* command a ſtrict Government of our Thoughts and Paſſions, as well as of our outward Actions and Behaviour. Thoſe ſecret motions of our Souls, which are beyond the Cognizance of any earthly Tribunal, are curiouſly inſpected, and impartially cenſured here. To contrive Sin, is Sin, in the ſenſe of the Goſpel, as well as to execute it. Covetous Deſires are Injuſtice; and revengeful Thoughts a Decree of Murder, Calumny and Reproach; Backbiting and Slander are rank'd amongſt the blackeſt Works of the Fleſh. To wound the good name of our Neighbour is as great an Injury, or by force or fraud to deprive him of his Right. To deny ourſelves, and that in very difficult inſtances, is a fundamental Duty, without the Practice of which, no Man can be admitted into the number of *Chriſt's Followers*. And what a Task is it to ſilence clamorous Paſſions, and make Fleſh and Blood truly quiet after Injuries and Affronts? How hard is it to baulk the appetite of Revenge, when it is in our Power to ſatisfy it; to do Good for Evil; and with relenting Bowels of Charity, embrace the Object which Nature ſhuns and ſtarts at? But more than this, *Chriſtianity* requires a great and generous temper of Soul, which is directly contrary to all the Principles of that baſe and ſtingy ſelf-Love, which we are ſo prone to indulge. By the Goſpel-Laws, our Thoughts and Cares are not to be centred ſolely in ourſelves; but a ſhare of both to be allowed to our Neighbour, whom we are obliged to *love as ourſelves*; and therefore to rejoice in his Good, to conſult and promote his Intereſt; and help either to deliver him from his Burdens, or put our own Shoulders to the bearing of them.

Nor is it leſs to live above the preſent World, as the Goſpel obliges us, and to be equally unſhaken by the Terrors and Allurements of it: To ſtand intrepid in the midſt of Dangers, and deſpiſe the loſs of all things, even the moſt near and dear to us; when Fidelity to our Lord, and a good Conſcience cannot be preſerved together with the Enjoyment of them. On the other hand, to guard our Affections from the pernicious Influences of thoſe enticing Objects that ſurround us, and paſs through all the ſcenes of worldly Pomp and Pleaſure here preſented to our View, with the unconcernedneſs of Strangers and Pilgrims, whoſe Deſires are towards another Country. In ſhort, how ſublime a thing is it to live by Faith, and not by Senſe? To depend upon a Promiſe of things unſeen under a thouſand Diſcouragements and Temptations to Infidelity? To ſubmit our Underſtandings with a becoming Humility to Myſteries that are entirely above them; our Wills to the Divine Pleaſure and Diſpoſal; and make it our Delight to do, and be in all Caſes, juſt what infinite Wiſdom ſhall think fit to determine.

And tho' there is no Man that comes up to ſo ſtrict an obſervance of theſe evangelical Precepts, as he ought to do, yet every Man is obliged, under the ſevereſt Penalties, to do his utmoſt; and with an undiſſembled Zeal and Reſolution, to preſs towards Perfection, as far as the unavoidable infirmities of human Nature will permit. Not that Men are hereby obliged to endeavour to diveſt themſelves of the paſſions and inclinations of human Nature; or to run into a ſullen Contempt of the uſeful and innocent Enjoyments of Life; affecting ſuch Severities, as would render Religion frightful to Mankind: But to make all their Pleaſures, for Kind and Degree, ſuch as the rules of the Goſpel allow of; to chuſe Objects with religious Judgment and Prudence, and give no more looſe to the Paſſions when employed about them, *than what is truly conſiſtent with the great end of all earthly Comforts; which is only to refreſh us, while we are in purſuit of better.*

SECT.

Sect. IX.

BUT now as all these sublime abstracted Duties are plainly calculated for, and adapted to the great end of preparing us for a future Happiness, such as the Gospel reveals; so if the Gospel be an Imposture, and all the Rewards it promises come to nothing, then these Duties themselves, losing their main End and Use, become burdensome Impositions on Mankind.

It is true indeed, the *Christian Religion*, be it a Truth or a Fiction, is so contrived, as to be in all respects admirably serviceable to the ends and purposes of a temporal Felicity. For those Principles of generous Love and Charity, that superiour temper of Mind, that devout and awful regard to God, and a future Life, which it tends to inspire Mankind withal; these are contrary, in the highest Degree, to all those mean and base Affections, which are the sole Disturbers of the Peace and good Order of the World. If Pride and Envy, if Covetousness and Ambition, if Malice and Revenge, if Falshood and Deceit; if such Passions as these are the true Causes of all those Calamities and Misfortunes which Men make such heavy complaints of: then the Gospel, which strikes so directly at all these, even in Men's Hearts and Tempers, as well as Conversation and outward Behaviour, does undoubtedly lay the surest Foundations possible for a quiet and comfortable Life in the present World.

Add to this: *That the Gospel of* Christ *strengthens the Obligations of the Law of Nature.*

It furnishes Men with far nobler Motives, to perform all the duties of that Law; and threatens severer Punishments, for the Breach of it: and thus it highly conduces to the welfare of Society and Government, and disposes Men of all Ranks and Stations, to be duly observant of, and beneficial to one another.

But

But when all is ſaid and done, what ſhall we ſay to thoſe ſublime and retired Duties, of abſolute Reſignation to the divine Will, of crucifying the Fleſh, and living by Faith; if *Chriſtianity* be a cheat, and there be no future State of Rewards? This is the Point I am enquiring into. Of what ſignificancy would theſe be, upon the preſent *Hypotheſis*? I do not think a Man is the leſs qualify'd for publick Buſineſs and Employment, or for the private Offices of Life, by being intimately converſant in theſe Duties. But what I inſiſt on is, that *if* Chriſtianity *be an* Impoſture, *the advantage redounding from theſe Duties will not anſwer the Coſt and Pains Men muſt be at, before they acquire an Habit of performing them in that manner, which the Goſpel obliges the* Chriſtians *to.* For there muſt be a great deal of Application, Care and Watchfulneſs; and a Man muſt make it the commanding Buſineſs of his Life, or he will be able to do but very little good at it. And when all is done, it is certain, it is what is abſolutely unneceſſary with reſpect to any mere temporal Felicity or Advantage.

An exact and punctual diſcharge of moral Duties, will be ſufficient to preſerve all Societies in a happy and flouriſhing Eſtate; and to eſtabliſh a man's own private Peace and Repoſe in the World. If you ſuppoſe the Goſpel to be true, and ſuch a ſort of Happineſs as it reveals to be certain hereafter; then indeed all *this Diſcipline* of *Chriſtianity* preſently becomes neceſſary in the higheſt degree; and at the ſame time, appears to be the moſt wiſe and excellent contrivance, that can poſſibly be imagined. Upon the *ſuppoſition of a glorious Life in the World to come*, it is plain, why Faith and Mortification and Self-denial ſhould be ſo ſtrictly enjoined in the preſent Life; namely, becauſe by the Practice of theſe Duties, Mens Minds are diſingaged from the baſe and ſordid Objects of this World, and brought to a reliſh ſuitable to the nature of the heavenly State, where all their Joys and Delights will be pure, and no Objects will ever be preſented

to

to entertain them, but what are truly noble and ſublime. But if you make the Goſpel a vile Cheat and a Fiction, and take away the Hopes of that bleſſed Life, to prepare Men for which, theſe inward and abſtracted Duties of *Chriſtianity* are, in their very Nature, plainly calculated; then they are all of them apparently uſeleſs and inſignificant, as to any valuable End or Purpoſe: And therefore, being ſo very difficult to perform, they are a heavy Load, and a mighty Diſadvantage on the Side of thoſe Perſons, who believe themſelves bound to live in the conſtant Practice of them; nor is this at all inconſiſtent with what I aſſerted before, *viz. That* Chriſtianity, *whether true or falſe, does exceedingly conduce to the temporal Welfare and Felicity of Mankind.* For the Principles which this Religion puts into Men, may be, and it is plain are actually ſuch as tend to make all the World eaſy and ſecure: and yet at the ſame time, the Diſcipline and the Duties of it may be very hard upon thoſe, who have given themſelves up to the Practice thereof.

To conclude then: Who are the *happy Men*, upon the preſent *Hypotheſis*, Thoſe who live free from the ſevere Labours and Toils of a Multitude of very coſtly Duties, giving their *Paſſions and Appetites* all the Scope that the *Law of Nature will fairly allow*; or thoſe who are thus bridled and confined, and ſpend precious time in the Duties of a vigorous *Service*, which will never be of any Advantage to them? Surely Eaſe and Freedom, in conjunction with Safety, are enough to make Mens Lives truly happy. And upon the preſent *Hypotheſis*, theſe Gentlemen are as ſecure, as they are free; provided they do but keep within the Bounds preſcribed by the eternal Law of Nature and Reaſon. Becauſe how much ſoever they tranſgreſs the Rules of the Goſpel, yet they have no danger to apprehend upon that ſcore; ſince the Authority of all the Goſpel-Laws vaniſhes with the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection.*

So

So that it is paſt all doubt, the *Deiſts* have by much the Advantage of thoſe that believe the Goſpel, with reſpect to the preſent World; if it be ſo, that the latter lie under a Deluſion as to this great Article of their Faith.

SECT. X.

I Hope what I have advanced here, will not be miſunderſtood; and that no Man will think, I am for throwing off all regard to the *Laws of Nature* in the preſent Life upon the Suppoſition, that we have no Rewards to expect hereafter: *That Men may be as extravagant and licentious as they pleaſe, and live like Beaſts while they are here; if all Views of future Happineſs and Immortality be taken away.*

The very Thoughts of this ſtrike a Man with Horror; and no *Chriſtian*, to be ſure, will ever entertain, much leſs ſtand by ſuch a ſort of Notion.

For my own part, I declare, I am far from imagining, *That our Obligations or Encouragement to any of the common Duties of Morality and natural Religion would, upon this ſuppoſition, be either weakned or taken away.* For, *Firſt*, It is in itſelf eternally fit and reaſonable, that we ſhould own the Sovereign Author of our Being, and thank him for the innumerable Benefits we receive in the preſent Life, even without Expectations of future Rewards from him. We owe him Praiſe and Acknowledgment for the Good we actually receive at his hands; and a Proſpect or no Proſpect of more Mercies behind, has nothing to do with our thankful Returns for thoſe that are preſent. It is true, if we have a View of more Bleſſings coming to us, we may be more chearful and enlarged in our Thankſgivings to ſo kind a Benefactor. But however, by receiving from him, we become infinitely indebted to him; and therefore to praiſe him for what we have is our indiſpenſible Duty. Theſe Duties there-

therefore, which are founded upon God's *Creation*, and Preſervation of us, and providential Diſpoſal of the Bleſſings of the preſent Life, are of a ſure and laſting Obligation; and while Human Nature continues, they muſt needs be of Force. And the taking away the Hope of a future Reward, can no more take off our Obligations to the Practice of theſe, than the having no Proſpect of a ſecond or third Mercy, can diſcharge us from the Duty of being thankful for a firſt, which we now actually enjoy.

And then, *Secondly*, as for the Practice of moral Virtues; a Man's own temporal Felicity, and the Well-being of human Society, do neceſſarily require a nice and ſtrict Obſervance of theſe. For example; *Temperance* is abſolutely neceſſary, both to our longer Enjoyment of the Comforts of the World and to our ſweeter and more exquiſite reliſh of them. Without *Prudence* and *Diſcretion* in the Management of the Affairs of Life, we can neither ſecure ourſelves in the Poſſeſſion of any Good we enjoy, nor make the beſt of it, to improve it as opportunity ſhall offer, for a farther increaſe of our Happineſs here: In a word, without this, we can neither avoid Dangers, live free from Abuſes and Impoſitions, nor with any tolerable Reputation amongſt Men. To be *affable and courteous* in our Deportment towards others, is the way to gain an univerſal Affection and Eſteem, and to engage Men to be ready to do us any good Offices that lie in their Power, when we may have an urgent Occaſion for them. To be *juſt and righteous in our Dealings with all Men*, is the way to be free from Injuries and Aſſaults, and never to make any of our Fellow-creatures our Enemies: And conſequently, there is no living ſafely and quietly in the world without it: *Since there is no Man whatſoever, ſo mean and little, but if provoked by bad and unjuſt Uſage, may, ſome time or other, have it in his Power to give very coſtly and dangerous Proofs of his Reſentments.* And ſo to have *due Reverence, and a loyal Regard for our Superiors*, is what even good Breeding, Honour, Intereſt, and Self-preſervation, will oblige us to. We

cannot

cannot tranſgreſs due Bounds here, without apparent Hazards; and to be good Subjects, if there were no other Reaſon for being ſo, is the directeſt way, either to make or mend our Fortunes in the World. And the ſame Principles will engage us, not only to be quiet and faithful, but alſo uſeful and induſtrious Members of the Communities in which we live; zealous to promote their Good, and careful to prevent all Miſchief that threatens them, as far as we can. *For our own private Intereſts and thoſe of the Publick are very cloſely linked together*; and when the whole Body ſuffers, it is much if each Member has not its ſhare in the common Calamity. It is true, that Men who have dared to be guilty of ſuch unnatural Baſeneſs and Treachery, as to intrigue with Enemies, and ſacrifice the Intereſts of the publick to them, may have ſometimes come off without their deſerved Puniſhment. But this rarely happens: And ſuch Crimes are ſo hateful both to God and to mankind in general, and even to thoſe who can be glad to make uſe of them to ſerve their own Turn; that they moſt commonly come home, either ſooner or later, with ſufficient Vengeance to the Committers of them. Divine Providence, which diſpoſes all Men in the world, where they ſhould be uſeful and ſerviceable in their Places, rarely fails to find ſuch out; and *the very Tempters to the Treaſon often become the Diſpenſers of a juſt Puniſhment to the Traitors.*

So that without any Proſpect of future Rewards, here are ſtrong and undeniable Obligations to the Practice of all theſe moral Duties. As long as the preſent State of the World laſts, and Men live together in Communities there will be urgent Reaſons why ſuch Rules ſhould be carefully obſerved, both in their Management of themſelves, and their Deportment towards one another.

Sect. XI.

THUS we have ſeen, what Circumſtances, both of Duty and Danger, the *Chriſtians* are placed under in

in the preſent World, in conſequence of their adherence to the Religion taught by *Chriſt Jeſus.*

I ſhall now make two or three general Reflections, upon what has been diſcourſed under this Head, concerning the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion.

Firſt, It is plain, that this Inſtitution is in itſelf admirably well adapted to the deſign of rectifying all the diſorders of Human Nature, and the improving it with all ſuch Virtues and Qualifications as are neceſſary, in the very nature of the Thing, to render it truly beautiful and excellent. Nor would I be underſtood here, to ſpeak only of what the *Chriſtian Religion* itſelf makes to be Virtue or Vice; but of that, which the common Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind pronounces to be ſo, abſtracting from all Revelation or poſitive Law, either to prove or condemn it as ſuch.

SECT. XII.

Secondly, THAT it will appear to every man, who conſiders it impartially, to have a direct Tendency to fit and qualify us for a future bleſſed State; *Such a one, as we ourſelves, if we think any thing worthily of God, ſhall judge it the moſt conſonant to his Perfection, to prepare for reaſonable Creatures, whom he delights to make happy:* And that this is the great drift and ſcope of all the Goſpel-Diſcipline and Precepts, how uſeful ſoever they are otherwiſe, to promote a temporal Felicity. And though this may be inferred eaſily enough, from that ſhort account before given, of the nature of the *Chriſtian Inſtitution*; yet I think it worth while to illuſtrate it a little particularly, by a brief *Rationale* of the three principal Duties enjoined therein.

SECT.

Sect. XIII.

AND, *Firſt* of all, as to a *Life of Faith.*

If it be ſo, that we are deſigned for another State hereafter, ſo very different from that we are now in, and where we ſhall be diſpoſed of for ever; then how fit and reaſonable is it, that we ſhould accuſtom ourſelves to ſerious Thoughts of it before-hand? That our Minds ſhould be thorowly convinced in general, of the certain Truth and Reality of ſuch a State; and particularly, of the glorious and happy Circumſtances, which righteous and holy Perſons are plac'd in there? *For ſuch a Conviction of the Mind is the moſt natural way to ſet all other good Principles at work; and thereby to bring us to ſuch a ſort of Temper and Converſation as may be in ſome Meaſure conformable to the manner of Life we ſhall live in that World.*

The Underſtanding muſt always be perſuaded, before we can proceed to any juſt and regular Action: And therefore, whether the Goſpel-Revelation be true or no, that Doctrine of the *Chriſtians* is certainly true; that Obedience and good Works are the certain Corollaries of a ſound and true Faith.

Beſides, a Habit of ſerious believing Meditation, is the propereſt means that can be to make the future State familiar to us, and ſo to wear off the frightful gloomy apprehenſions of paſſing into a World wholly unknown. And is not this infinitely better, than taking a leap in the dark, with our modern Unbelievers, or going off the Stage in a fog of Doubts, whether Annihilation, or ſome new and ſtrange mode of Being, will not be the very next ſtep to dying here? I do not ſay, but *Chriſtians*, as well as other Men, have, and may die under doubts and fears. For ſuppoſing that the Goſpel is a divine Revelation; yet it is not preſently neceſſary, that all thoſe who believe it, ſhould be as different from other People in

in their dying, as the Precepts of it, if ſtrictly obſerv'd, would make them to be in their Living. But what I ſay, is, that if the Goſpel be a Divine Revelation, we have then a ſure Proviſion made for dying ſafely, and a ſufficient Antidote too againſt dying uncomfortably. And if matters ever happen otherwiſe with a ſincere *Chriſtian* (as for many Reaſons both natural and moral, it may be, by the Sufferance of Divine Providence) yet there is enough in the Promiſes of the Goſpel, to anſwer for all that, and ſecure a Man, that he ſhall be no Loſer by it in the World to come.

SECT. XIV.

Secondly, IT cannot be imagin'd, that in a State where God deſigns to make Men perfectly happy, *They ſhall ever be taken up in mean and pitiful Converſations with things of ſo vile and unſatisfying a Nature, as they are employ'd about here in this World.* And therefore, it follows that Human Nature, when put into the Poſſeſſion of ſuch a Felicity, ſhall not retain any of thoſe baſe ignoble Paſſions, which tend ſo much to the Diſturbance of a happy Life both in Publick and Private; and ſet thoſe who are Slaves to them, upon a level with the Beaſts themſelves. If we can find any Reaſons to perſuade ourſelves, that the Author of our Beings will make us happy in another Life; we may be ſatisfy'd that he will never do it in ſo ſordid and inferior a Way, as *ſuch Objects and ſuch irregular Affections* would make it to be.

How reaſonable a Duty then is *Mortification?* What is this but curbing the Extravagancy and altering the Bent of ſinful Diſpoſitions? And is it not the right Way to begin now; ſince our Inclinations muſt be ſo refined, and our Way of Converſe and Fruition ſo changed hereafter? Let us but think in what Manner we ſhall live above! Subſtantial Truth will be the Repaſt of our Minds,

and every Act of Love and Deſire beſtowed on ſuch things, as will be *worth the Attention of a reaſonable Soul, and fill it with a laſting Satisfaction.* But then our Tempers muſt be fitted and proportioned to this before-hand. The Songs of Angels would be but unpleaſant Muſick to a Man that never loved or thought of God in this Life. That quick and chearful diſpatch of Duty, that ready Obedience to the divine Commands, which muſt be the great Delight of all the heavenly Inhabitants; how ſhocking and ungrateful would they be to the Humour of a vicious Perſon, *who had always made his own Will his Law, and never known any ſort of Pleaſure, ſuperiour to that of gratifying his Luſts?* To promote this Thought a little; let us but conſider, *How ſtrangely uncouth and diſagreeable ſome particular Converſations and Modes of living here in the World are to Men, whoſe Intereſts, Tempers, Educations or Endowments, have given them quite another turn, and diſpoſed them the contrary Way.* Nay, though ſuch Methods of living are in reality ever ſo much better than others are, yet they are infinitely worſe to thoſe Perſons who have been always uſed to manage themſelves after a different manner.

All the Learning and good Manners, the genteel Cuſtoms and noble Exerciſes of the moſt polite Nation upon Earth, would afford no Entertainment to a wild Savage, brought out of the Herd by mere Force, and pining with Deſire to be there again. Nor would a Sinner, unprepared by the Grace of the Goſpel, have more pleaſing Senſations, *were he to be ſet down with all his irregular Paſſions and Diſpoſitions in that bright and holy Aſſembly above.* Every thing would be out of his Sphere, and quite beſide his Taſte and Reliſh. He would be ſick of thoſe Divine Pleaſures, and tormented with not knowing how to behave, and where to beſtow himſelf.

And therefore, ſince we cannot ſuppoſe, that God will ever bring us to ſuch a Place as Heaven, to make us uneaſy and miſerable there; how juſt and fit is it that we ſhould

ſhould now mortify all thoſe fleſhly Affections, which are ſo incompatible with it, and cannot (in the very nature of the thing) ever be carried thither along with us?

SECT. XV.

AND, Thirdly, *The Exerciſe of that univerſal Love and Charity* which the Goſpel obliges us to, has likewiſe a direct Tendency to the great End we are ſpeaking of: Becauſe this naturally tends to carry off all that Sourneſs and Malignity of Temper, that baſe and ſelfiſh Diſpoſition, which are ſo contrary to the heavenly State. By the Practice of theſe Virtues our Souls are enlarged, and our Diſpoſitions rendered ſweet and benign. We become more like to God our heavenly Father, *whoſe Mercy and Goodneſs are over all his Works.* We are conformed more to the Spirit and Genius of that World, *where we ſhall be united by the ſtricteſt Bonds of Love to all that ſhare with us in the ſame Felicity.* For whatever evil Affections reign in our Breaſts, and break forth amongſt us, to the Diſturbance of Peace and brotherly Love, and our very great Eſtrangement from one another in this World; it is certain, we ſhall live together in a far better Underſtanding in the next. There all Jealouſy and Suſpicion, Envy and Emulation, Wrath and Contention, will ceaſe for ever. It will be the delightful Work of all that come thither to rejoice in God, and one another's Happineſs; and conſpire together in the moſt perfect Manner to obey and glorify him. And what then, ſhould any thing of a baſe and ſordid, or a ſour invidious Temper do in ſuch a State, and amongſt ſuch Company: And how ſhould we ever be freed from the Prevalence of ſuch Principles and Habits, as plainly tend to render us uncapable of this bleſſed Life: but by being trained up under the *Goſpel-Diſcipline, which does both enjoin and teach us, how to ſubdue and get rid of them?*

SECT. XVI.

Thirdly, FROM what has been diſcourſed of the Nature of the *Chriſtian Religion* ariſes *a very plain and eaſy Account of the Origin of* Deiſm.

All that the incredulous People ſay, and all that they do, by way of Oppoſition to the *Chriſtian Religion*, will follow ſo naturally from one ſimple Principle (which no body can make a difficulty of allowing) that one would almoſt be tempted to conclude, without any further Iniquiry, *That this muſt be the true and genuine Cauſe of all.* For only ſuppoſe a Perſon to go ſo far, as to make ſuch a Concluſion as this with himſelf:

I will endure no Curb nor Reſtraint upon me in the Proſecution of my Deſign of being happy in this World; but whatever I ſhall at any time believe to make for my Repoſe, or the Entertainment of my Paſſions (by what Names ſoever other People may call it, whether allowable or forbidden) I will endeavour to gratify my ſelf with the Enjoyment of it, to the utmoſt of my Power.

Now all the Phenomena of *Deiſm* will be ſolved by this without any more ado. For from hence it preſently follows, That *whatever ſtands in the way to croſs this Reſolution muſt be vigorouſly and heartily oppoſed.* Let it otherwiſe be ever ſo rational and juſt, yet if it thwarts the grand Deſign of a free and uninterrupted Enjoyment of the preſent World; it muſt be treated as things always are, which pretend to deprive Men of what is moſt grateful and agreeable to them; that is, be expoſed in all Reſpects, as far as poſſible.

And therefore the Goſpel which pretends to abridge Men of ſo much Liberty, and obliges them to a ſtrictly abſtemious and ſelf-denying Life, and a ready Submiſſion to all Sufferings, which the Power and Malice of the World may at any time inflict for the Profeſſion of it; muſt of courſe be denied to be a divine Revelation, and made

made the mere Invention of a Set of crafty deſigning Men, who were proud to be the Heads of a new Religion, and fond of making Mankind ſtoop to ſuch Laws as they ſhould think fit to impoſe on them. And hence the *Chriſtians* muſt be repreſented too, as a credulous bigotted ſort of People, who have not Senſe nor Sagacity enough to ſee thro' the Impoſture; but are held faſt in their fond Belief by the Artifices and Management of thoſe Perſons, whoſe Buſineſs and Intereſt it is, and has been always, to maintain and propagate the Cheat. All this will follow from one ſtated Reſolution to be under no Reſtraints, in the Purſuit and Enjoyment of the Pleaſures of the World. How unreaſonable ſoever the Inferences are in themſelves; yet they naturally follow, upon the making ſuch a Concluſion in a Man's own Mind.

SECT. XVII.

HOwever, tho' all this be very plain and clear, yet I would by no means be thought to aſſert, *That this is the only poſſible Cauſe of* Deiſm; or that all who disbelieve the *Chriſtian Revelation*, do it upon this Principle alone.

I believe it not impoſſible for a Man to be a *Deiſt* upon Theory, or mere ſpeculative Principles. Natural Pride and Conceit, wrong Notions of human Nature, and particularly of the Power of the Underſtanding; by which Men ſet it up for an abſolute and unlimited Judge of all things, and lay this down for a Rule, which is demonſtrably a fallacious one, *That nothing is true which the Mind cannot comprehend by its own native Force*; as if an infinitely wiſe and profound Being ought never to ſay any thing to ſuch Creatures as we are, but what we ſhould preſently take, and penetrate into all the Reaſons of; and as if it were any more unfit in the nature of things, or unbecoming the Perfections of God, to propoſe unſearchable Myſteries to the Underſtanding, than to impoſe *Laws on the Will and*

Affections: theſe, I ſay, and ſuch like Cauſes, may lead ſome Men, who have otherwiſe a regard to Virtue and common Morality, into inveterate Prejudices againſt *Chriſtianity*. For ſetting themſelves to try the Doctrines and Myſteries of it by their own falſe Rules, and finding they will not ſquare with them, they preſently condemn them as abſurd and irrational, and therefore impoſſible ever to come from God; and ſo all the reſt is rejected of courſe. And thus by the means of one fundamental Blunder, the Goſpel is thrown by, the whole *Chriſtian Religion* made an Impoſture in a trice, and they ſet out for profeſſed Enemies and Oppoſers of it. But I imagine this to be the Caſe but of few. It is poſſible that others, who may, for all that I know, approve of the morality of the Goſpel, and practiſe it too, as far as it keeps pace with the Law of Nature, may yet think the inward and abſtracted Duties which it enjoins, too cumberſom, and perhaps ſuch an unreaſonable Tax upon Mankind, as an infinitely merciful God (according to their Notions of infinite Mercy and Goodneſs) would never impoſe. And tho' the Error of this ſort of *Deiſts* takes its riſe from a Principle very different from that of the former: yet it is as bad, and ſticks as faſt: wrong Notions of the Government of God over rational Creatures, are not leſs pernicious, nor may they do leſs Miſchief to ſome, than an over-weaning Conceit of the Power of human Underſtanding may to others. I can only ſay, with reſpect to theſe Gentlemen on both ſides, *That when they have carefully corrected their Notions of the ſupreme Being, by what is demonſtrable of his infinite Perfections; and when they have likewiſe rectified their Schemes about human Nature, according to what plain Fact and Experience ſhew us to be undeniably true of it:* That then theſe Objections againſt *Chriſtianity* will ceaſe; and thoſe on one ſide will no more think the ſublimeſt Doctrines unfit to be believed, than thoſe on the other the moſt abſtracted Duties unreaſonable to be performed.

And this is all the Anſwer I think is owing to that ſort of Men.

SECT.

SECT. XVIII.

BUT notwithſtanding all theſe Conceſſions of things that are poſſible, and may be; the Caſe is quite altered when we come to ſpeak of what is probable, and moſt likely to be. And here, tho' the *Libertine* and ſenſual *Deiſt*, and the ſeemingly ſpeculative or rational ones, do all unanimouſly agree, *in exclaiming againſt ſome Doctrines and Myſteries of the* Chriſtian Religion, *which, they ſay, are abſurd and contradictory, and affront all the Reaſon of Mankind; or elſe pretend to take offence at ſome trivial Corruptions and abuſes of the Canon; little Difficulties which they call inſolvible, becauſe they know not how, or do not care to attempt the Solution of them; and greater than the greateſt of which, they eaſily paſs over, and pardon every day in profane Authors:* Yet after all, to deal freely and plainly with them, I muſt ſay, that there are Reaſons enough to make People firmly believe, *That the Precepts and Prohibitions of the Goſpel are the Parts of it which give the main Offence.*

SECT. XIX.

FOR, *Firſt*, Few People *reſent Affronts offered to their Reaſon*, ſo much as they do *Confinement* and Impoſitions on their Liberty. Becauſe Paſſion and Appetite govern more Men, and moſt Men more, than Reaſon and Underſtanding do; and ſo are much more likely to be the occaſion of the Quarrel.

Secondly, Where pure Scruples of the Mind are the occaſion of a Controverſy, it ſeldom proceeds with ſo much Malignity and Virulence, as this Diſpute has always been managed on their ſide withal. Cloſe Reaſoning is the proper and genuine Revenge of an affronted

Underſtanding: As on the other hand, Satire and Raillery always betray Intereſt and Paſſion, and ſhew they are far more concerned in the Matter than Reaſon and Judgment.

Thirdly, But in the next Place, if the great Offence taken againſt *Chriſtianity* were occaſioned by the Difficulties of ſome Doctrines propoſed by it; *Why ſhould the* Chriſtian Religion *meet with ſo much worſe Treatment in general from theſe Gentlemen, than another Religion does, which in their Judgments as well as ours, is full of manifeſt Abſurdities, and carries all the plain Marks of an Impoſture along with it; but at the ſame time does not reſtrain and tie Men up, ſo as the* Chriſtian Religion *does?* They eaſily conclude, that the Religion I intend here, is that of *Mahomet*; which abſtracting from all the falſe and invidious Repreſentations made of it by the miſguided Zeal of ſome *Chriſtians*, is undoubtedly an Inſtitution unworthy of God to appoint, and unfit for *reaſonable Creatures* to receive. If this be queſtioned, there are plentiful Demonſtrations of it to be fetched from ſuch Accounts and Records of that Religion, as the moſt learned Profeſſors thereof do themſelves own to be genuine and authentick. I muſt not enlarge much on this Head, which is ſomething foreign to my preſent Purpoſe, and ſhall therefore only ſuggeſt a few things briefly.

SECT. XX.

Firſt, IT is beyond Diſpute, that *Mahomet*, the Author of this Religion, was a Perſon of a vicious profligate Life, and ſo far from behaving himſelf like a Meſſenger ſent from God to teach Mankind Piety and Devotion; that he was in his whole Converſation a ſignal Example of the contrary.

Secondly, That the Canon of his Religion, beſides many Impertinencies and Abſurdities, which are plainly nau-

nauſeous, contains groſs and palpable Falſities, both in Matter of Fact and Doctrine too. Some perhaps who have a very great Opinion of the Moral Part of this Religion, may think this latter Charge, as to the Doctrines, unjuſt: But thoſe Perſons may be very eaſily ſatisfy'd, if they pleaſe. For when Doctrines are propos'd as Divine, which are evidently inconſiſtent with the Divine Perfections, as many of *Mahomet*'s were, ſuch Doctrines as theſe are very properly and juſtly called falſe ones.

Thirdly, That this Religion was evidently calculated to ſerve a carnal worldly Intereſt. The *Alcoran*, which is the ſtandard of it, being ſhaped and moulded according to Opportunity and Occaſion, and fitted in all reſpects to anſwer the ſordid Ends of the Writer thereof; who for that Reaſon added and ſubſtracted, alter'd and mended upon every Emergency, as his own Affairs and the uncertain Humour of the People required; and then at laſt threw all upon the Angel *Gabriel*, who was pretended every now and then, to bring him down freſh Diſpatches and Advices from Heaven.

Fourthly, That as the firſt Contrivance, ſo all the great Steps towards the Propagation of this Religion, while in its Infancy, were made entirely by Fraud and Artifice; which wrought upon the Ignorance, and accommodated itſelf to the Temper and Vices of the People; and was ſheltered from Diſcovery not only by their Illiterateneſs, but the Diſtance of Places, and the want of all Communication with the learned World.

Fifthly and Laſtly, That it is a Religion in it ſelf injurious and oppreſſive to Mankind, as it came afterwards to be planted and eſtabliſh'd in the World by Force and Violence, and never offer'd any other Arguments to perſuade Men of the Truth of it, but the Sword, or heavy Taxes and Exactions; not only perſecuting and extorting what was not due from other Men, but alſo thereby depriving them of their natural Right and Liberty of judging for themſelves, and uſing their Reaſon in Matters of the greateſt Concern to them.

Theſe

Theſe things are plain Fact, as every Man may ſatisfy himſelf that will but enquire. Now I beg leave of theſe Gentlemen to put a Queſtion or two to them, upon the Score of what I have been ſaying.

SECT. XXI.

Firſt, DID they ever demonſtrate the Charge of Impoſture againſt *Chriſtianity*, with that undeniable Evidence that theſe Articles I have mentioned to demonſtrate it againſt the Religion of *Mahomet?* Nay to come as low as poſſible, did they ever ſhew a tolerable Probability that the Religion of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as contained in the New Teſtament, ſhould be ſuch a ſort of Contexture as the other is; either upon the Account of its Author, its Ends, its Propagation, the Rewards it promiſes, the Precepts it gives, or the Principles it inſpires Men withal?

If they have ever fairly done this, then it may ſome Way or other be made to appear.

If they have not: Then,

SECT. XXII.

Secondly, WHY *is there ſo loud a Cry of Juggle and Impoſture ſet up againſt* Chriſtianity, *againſt which the charge has ſcarce ever been attempted to be made out, rather than the Religion of* Mahomet, *where they grant the Forgery to be paſt Diſpute?* I would not be thought to encourage Inſults and Affronts to any Religion, how falſe and prepoſterous ſoever it be. Men whom we believe to be in a wrong Way ſhould be better informed and argued with: But their Religion ſhould not be treated in ſcandalous Terms; for this always heightens Prejudice, and breeds ill Blood. But what I ſpeak of, is the arbitrary Proceeding

ing of theſe Gentlemen to pick out the *Chriſtian Religion*, and only that, for the common Subject of their Banter and Railery, when there is another at hand, which they know and own to be a Cheat; and at the ſame time eſcapes which very little notice: At leaſt they do not make a Trade, a ſtated Work of expoſing this, as they do *Chriſtianity*. If there be a little Fling, ſometimes by Chance, at the *Alcoran*; the *Criticks* are always exerciſing their Wits upon the Goſpel, and finding out little Flaws and Contradictions there, *which none elſe, who uſe the ſame ſort of Senſes and Faculties that they do, could ever yet diſcover.*

If the ſubtle management of the pretended Prophet of the *Sarazens*, and his Comrades, happen once and again to be ſtarted as an Argument of Diſcourſe, yet *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* are daily brought upon the Stage to entertain the moſt ludicrous Converſations: And when they are ſpared, the Preachers of the Goſpel, who miniſter by a Commiſſion from *Jeſus Chriſt*, for carrying on the ſame Work in the World, are ſure to pay for all, by the worſt of Affronts and Reproaches; enduring herein, a Part of that Perſecution, which our Saviour had foretold, and which the Apoſtles themſelves began to feel, who were made as the Droſs and Offſcouring of all things. Now, I ſay, *Why all this Noiſe and Stir about* Chriſtianity? Here are two Religions before you, Gentlemen; the one of which you can demonſtrate to be a Cheat, and the other you cannot; for if you could, you have ſufficiently ſhewn your Inclinations that you would have done it: Why do you ſingle out the Latter, and not the Former, to diſcharge all your Spleen and Choler againſt? Why *Jeſus Chriſt* more than *Mahomet?* Is it becauſe he is the *Prophet* whom the Country worſhips and adores? Moſt People for that very Reaſon, if they have no other, would think themſelves obliged in good Manners, to keep their Reſentments to themſelves. Is it out of a charitable Regard to the Welfare of Mankind, becauſe they

ſhould

ſhould not be led away by a Deluſion; Men are made to be wrought on by Arguments, and not by Scurrility and Reproach: And it is certain, that if any Perſons are perſuaded to relinquiſh an Opinion, merely by hearing it abuſed and expoſed, they act irrationally, even tho' they change their Minds ever ſo much for the better.

In ſhort, whatever ſecret Reaſons theſe Gentlemen may have for acting after this Manner, this muſt be ſaid, *That it will always look very ſuſpiciouſly to ſee Men*, who ſet up for the Diſcovery of Impoſture, *touch ſo lightly upon a Religion which makes amends for Abſurdities by plentiful Indulgences granted to Fleſh and Blood; and take all Occaſions to bear ſo hard upon* Chriſtianity, *which ſtrictly enjoins the Practice of all Virtue and Piety, and prohibits whatever is contrary thereto under the ſevereſt Penalties.*

SECT. XXIII.

WHAT has been ſpoken hitherto relates to the *Chriſtian Law*, by which the *Deiſts*, according to their own Principles, are not at all bound; and have for that Reaſon a much eaſier Life of it in the preſent World, than the *Chriſtians* have. But there is ſomething ſtill to be ſaid with reſpect to the *Law of Nature*, to which all the great Pretenſions of theſe Gentlemen are. And tho' I do not urge this at all, as an Inſtance of their being more happy than the *Chriſtians* in the preſent Life; yet I urge it as an Argument with them to conſider, *Of what ſignal Advantage* Chriſtianity *would be to them in the Practice even of their own natural Religion.* And therefore I would here lay down this Propoſition: *viz. That thoſe who reject the Goſpel-Revelation, are not ſo firmly bound by the Law of Nature itſelf to the Practice of all thoſe Duties which fall within the compaſs of that Law; as the* Chriſtians *are, by Virtue of the Principles they proceed upon, in Conſequence of their Belief of the Goſpel.* This is an undoubted Truth, what-

whatever Opinion they have concerning the Law of Nature; or what Notion ſoever it is that they take it in.

Firſt, They may look on it, not as a Divine Law or Inſtitution, in which the all-wiſe Creator has ſignified his Will concerning our Duty to himſelf, and Deportment towards one another; but only as ſomething reſulting from Education, Example, Cuſtom, or the like: And conſequently believe no other Sanction to be annexed thereto, beſides that of the preſent good and bad Conſequences of the Obſervance or Neglect of it. Now in this Caſe, it is plain, that it is but a very ſlender Guard upon a Man's Actions and Converſations in the World. With ſuch Notions as theſe, he is left at full liberty to determine Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, juſt as his Inclination or Intereſt, or Opportunity ſhall prompt him. And we know that ſome of the modern Oppoſers of *Chriſtianity* have eſpouſed theſe Principles; being led to it by the neceſſity of their Scheme, which naturally draws on one Invention or *Hypotheſis* to ſupport another before advanc'd. They have gone ſo far, as to take away all abſolute intrinſecal Diſtinction between good and evil; making no other difference between them, than what time or Convenience, or the Humours and Practices of Men do make: So that Good is changed into Evil, or Evil into Good, by the mere alteration of external Circumſtances. And tho' it muſt be allowed, that this *Hypotheſis* is of a pretty antient Date, and that ſome * *Poets* and *Philoſophers*, for many Ages ago, have talked after this manner; yet it is true alſo, that others of ſuperior Senſe and Reputation, have deteſted theſe Notions, and propagated others more worthy of God and Human Nature. And indeed there

* —— Οὐδὲν ἄν πάντη καλὸν,
Οὐδ' ἀισχρὸν· ἀλλὰ ταὐτ' ἐτοίμως λαβών.
Ὁ ΚΑΙΡΟΣ ἀισχρὸ, ἢ παλαίξας καλά. Opuſc. Mythol. *Pag.* 715.

Τὰ δὲ καλὰ ἢ τὰ δίκαια περὶ ὧν ἡ πολιτικὴ σκοπεῖται, τοιαῦτα, ἔχει διαφορὰν ἢ πλάνην, ὥστε δοκεῖν νόμῳ μόνον εἶναι, φύσει δὲ μή. Ariſtot. Ethic. *l.* 1. *c.* 1.

is juſt Reaſon, why ſuch Schemes as theſe ſhould be abhorred of all Mankind, that make any pretences to live ſoberly and rationally. Becauſe there can be no manner of Defence or Security, where ſuch Principles as theſe take place. For at this rate, Men may be guilty of the worſt Crimes that can be committed, and yet bring themſelves off as innocent when they have done. For they have nothing but Puniſhment from the Laws of the Society whereof they are Members, to keep them in awe; and if they can but ſecure themſelves from that Danger, they are ready prepared to trample all other Obligations under foot; even thoſe, which in the Opinion, and by the common conſent of all Nations whatſoever, ought to be held the moſt Sacred and Inviolable.

And then, another thing to be conſidered too, is that, whatever theſe Gentlemen make of the Law of Nature, they have it all entirely in their own keeping, and conſequently at their own diſpoſe; becauſe by their Principles they are for no *revealed* or written Laws. It is all locked up in their own Breaſts, where it is liable to any Management they ſhall think fit to beſtow on it, either by way of Diſpenſation, Abrogation, Expoſition, or Accommodation to a preſent Caſe. Now methinks, as the larger Government of Kingdoms and Countries, which is thus adminiſtred, is by all People juſtly called tyrannical and arbitrary; ſo there is as much reaſon for the uſe of the ſame Terms, when the Government of a Man's Life and Paſſions ſtand upon the ſame precarious Foundation. It may well be called an Arbitrary one, becauſe it is left entirely to a Man's own Pleaſure, how he will behave and diſpoſe of himſelf.

Now can I ſee why People ſhould pretend to cry out againſt ſuch forms of Government amongſt Mankind; why they ſhould argue ſo freely againſt the Danger and Unreaſonableneſs of them; and at the ſame time ſet up for abſolute unlimited lawleſs Monarchs over themſelves, and approve ſuch a Regimen in their own Breaſts, as they abhor and condemn in the World. Now

Now tho' it must be granted, that Men, who are willing to transgress, may abuse *written* as well as unwritten Laws, and expound them so as may best serve their own Turn upon Occasion; yet it must be allowed, that in the nature of the thing Revelation is a better Guard, than a bare Scheme of Principles without it.

For Men must take more pains to conquer the Sense of a standing written Law, which is ready to confront them upon all Occasions; they must more industriously tamper with their Passions, and bribe their Understandings, before they can bring themselves to believe what they have a mind to believe, in contradiction to the Words of an express and formal Declaration of God Almighty's Will; than there can be any Pretence or Occasion for, when they have no more than their own Thoughts and Ideas to manage. These are flexible Things, and a Man may much more easily turn and wind them as he pleases, than he can evade a plain and positive Law, *which determines the Kinds and Measures of his Duty, vnd threatens Disobedience in such Terms as require long Practice and Experience, to make handsome Salvo's and Distinctions to get over.*

SECT. XXIV.

ON the other hand, if we consider the state of the Case with respect to the *Christians*, we shall find a very great difference. For, as to the *Law of Nature*: First, They believe it be a **Divine* Impression on the reasonable Nature of Man, by which he is informed what is good and evil, and directed how to behave himself after such a manner as a Creature so made and endowed as he is, ought

* *This was the Notion of some of the wiser* Heathens, *as well as of the* Christians. Archytas, *speaking of* Man (*in* Libr. Sapientiæ) *and his Advantages above all the rest of the Creatures, adds these Words*; Ἐνεχάραξε καὶ ἐπεσημήνατο τὸ ΘΕΊΟΝ αὐτῷ, τὸ τῶ παντὸς λόγω ΣΥΣΤΗΜΑ. Opusc. Mythol. *Pag.* 732.

to do. Now when it is looked on as a *Law of God*, ſuch a Senſe of it is more likely to awe Men into a ſerious regard to it, and to produce good Effects in their Lives and Converſations, than that ſlight Opinion of it before mentioned.

Secondly, They believe this Law to have a Sanction of Rewards and Puniſhments, which reſpect not only *This*, but a *future Life* alſo: And this is a Conſideration of infinitely greater Moment, than that of all the temporal Advantages or Diſadvantages which can poſſibly redound from a Man's Obedience or Diſobedience thereto.

Thirdly and Laſtly, It is expreſsly written in a Book, which they eſteem as a Divine Revelation; and therefore cannot be ſo eaſily eluded, nor render'd ſubject to ſuch Management, as a wandering Notion in a Man's Mind may be.

SECT. XXV.

BUT, *Secondly*, Suppoſe theſe Gentlemen to take the Law of Nature in that Senſe, which of all others will give it the moſt Authority over them; that is, to believe it a *Divine Law:* Yet ſtill the Obligations of it are much ſtronger on the *Chriſtians*, than they can poſſibly be on *them*. For the Law of Nature is in itſelf taken into the Body of the Laws of *Chriſt Jeſus*, and compoſes one Part of that Inſtitution which the *Chriſtians* have receiv'd from him, and believe to be of divine Authority. Beſides all thoſe ſublime Doctrines and Precepts which are ſpecifically diſtinct from, and ſuperlatively tranſcendent to thoſe of the Law of Nature; the Goſpel contains the entire Subſtance of that Law itſelf, together with divers excellent Improvements and Explications thereof, made by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and enforced and urged by him, upon all that embrace his Religion. So that over and above that Obligation, which is common to others with them, conſider'd merely as Men; here is a new one reſulting from their

their Belief and Acknowledgment of the Goſpel Revelation: Inſomuch that the Duties enjoin'd even by the Natural Law, are now to be perform'd by them, out of a devout Regard to God, not only as the Author of *Nature*, and the bountiful Benefactor of Mankind; but alſo as the Author and Fountain of all thoſe inexpreſſible Benefits, which, as *Chriſtians*, they believe they are made Partakers of by *Jeſus Chriſt*. Now in the Nature of the thing itſelf, the Strength of all Obligations does increaſe proportionably to the Value and Moment of thoſe Things, which are the Foundations of them; and conſequently, this new Obligation which lies on the *Chriſtians*, as ſuch, muſt be as much more powerful than that which reſpects them and others, conſider'd only as Men; as the Bleſſings of Redemption purchaſed and beſtowed by *Jeſus Chriſt*, are ſuperior in their Notions to the common Bleſſings of Nature. And therefore this Obligation added to the former, muſt have as much more force to engage the *Chriſtians* to a ſtrict and conſcientious Regard to the Law of Nature, than the former alone can have to produce the ſame effect on thoſe Gentlemen who reject the Goſpel: As much more, I ſay, as the benefits of Redemption, added to thoſe of Nature and Providence, do tranſcend the Latter taken by themſelves. So that even allowing theſe perſons to receive and obey the Law of Nature as a Law of God, and out of a Senſe of Duty to him, which Conceſſion notwithſtanding may be more kind than juſt, yet ſtill their Obligations fall exceedingly ſhort of thoſe which the *Chriſtians* lie under. But if they have no Regard to it as a Law of God, but perform Natural Duties from ſuch Principles only, as Education, Cuſtom, Intereſt, Affection, Fear, Gratitude, or the like: Then, I think, the Odds are almoſt beyond Compariſon; and it cannot well be expreſſed, how much more firmly the *Chriſtians* are bound to theſe Duties, than thoſe who diſown the Goſpel-Revelation.

SECT. XXVI.

Coroll. 1. There is a better Security for the exact and punctual diſcharge of all moral Duties, from thoſe who believe the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, than from thoſe who do not. For there muſt needs be the beſt Security in Reaſon, and the Nature of the thing, where the ſtrongeſt Obligations lie: And it is apparent, that they lie on the Side of thoſe, who own the Goſpel to be a Divine Revelation. I do not ſay here what *Chriſtians* actually are, but what by their Principles they ought to be, and what may rationally be expected from them, as juſt and due by Virtue of their Profeſſion. Many indeed, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, do ſcandalouſly tranſgreſs the Laws of Nature and the Goſpel too. But, by their own Principles, their obligations to do otherwiſe, are unchangeably fixed; and they run infinite Hazards, by being guilty of ſuch Enormities; for their own Law condemns them to everlaſting Puniſhments, without true Repentance and Amendment. Now what Men cannot do without expoſing themſelves to the laſt degree of Danger and Inconvenience, they may be ſaid in a moral Senſe not to be able to do. And therefore, whatever Duties I expect the Performance of, from Men in any Place or Station; I may be more ſecure of them, who muſt expoſe and endanger themſelves to ſo high a Degree, if they are falſe and unfaithful; than I can of thoſe, who have no ſuch Principles to be a Guard upon them, and prevent the Breach of their Duty and Truſt. If they are ſincerely ſuch as I take them for, their Principles will govern them; and the Danger they are expos'd to, will be a Guard upon them, to keep them from habitual Excurſions: If they are not ſuch, they do not fall within the Bounds of the preſent Queſtion. Nay, tho' I make the Suppoſition, that the *Chriſtians* are deluded in taking the Goſpel for a Di-

Divine Revelation, yet the argument will proceed all one as before. For ſince the belief, that it is a Divine Revelation, is ſo firmly rooted in their minds; then till the contrary is plainly demonſtrated to them, they muſt needs diſcharge all Duties and Offices whatſoever, juſt in the ſame manner and with the ſame care, as they would do, if the caſe were otherwiſe, and they were not deceived at all.

Coroll. 2. As far as the ſtrongeſt Engagements to the practice of moral Duties, can be ſuppoſed to have an influence on the peace and good order of the World, or the welfare of any particular Society; ſo far it is likely, that thoſe who embrace the *Chriſtian Religion*, ſhould be better members of Society, and more uſeful in all relations, than thoſe who diſown the divine Authority thereof.

SECT. XXVII.

I Have now ſhewn in the foregoing Particulars, all that I think will follow without Exception; upon the *Hypotheſis*, *That the* Chriſtians *are deceived as to the Matter of Fact of* Chriſt's Reſurrection.

The *Deiſts*, I know very well, go farther yet, and draw another Inference, which is very much to our diſadvantage, *viz. That the* Chriſtians *will be liable to as ſevere and terrible Puniſhments, if the Goſpel ſhould be found to be an Impoſture at laſt; as they themſelves, on the other ſide, ſhall be, if it ſhould prove to be a divine Revelation.*

For ſay they, *If it ſhould be ſo, then here you have affronted the Majeſty of Heaven to a very high degree, in believing him to be the Author of ſo vile an Impoſture, as your whole Religion in that caſe muſt be; beſides, you have paid divine Honours, and given Religious Worſhip to* Jeſus Chriſt, *who was never inveſted with any Authority by God Almighty, nor had any Commiſſion from him, either to teach thoſe Doctrines, or eſtabliſh that Diſcipline in the World which you have received as divine, and laid all the ſtreſs of your Salvation upon.*

And therefore, as you have reflected on the Attributes of God, and robbed him of his Glory to ſuch a degree, by embracing this Deluſion as his Contrivance and Appointment; ſo to vindicate the Honour of his injured Perfections, and expreſs his infinite Abhorrence of ſuch Crimes, he can do no leſs than ſeverely puniſh thoſe who have committed them.

It is well known, that theſe Gentlemen do talk after this rate; and this is their ſtated Anſwer now-a-days, to a Man who urges the dangerous Conſequences of Infidelity upon them. There was no manner of Reaſon, why I ſhould conceal or diſſemble any part of what they ſay upon this Occaſion.

For as it is but giving them fair Play, ſo the Cauſe of *Chriſtianity* cannot ſuffer any Prejudice by it; nor will any of its Profeſſors, I believe, be ſcared, to hear theſe Gentlemen bid them expect the moſt diſmal Puniſhments in the next World that Almighty Juſtice can inflict, *if the Doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *be not true.*

SECT. XXVIII.

HOwever, as theſe Gentlemen ſeem very fond of this Notion, and object it with a Briſkneſs, that argues they eſteem it a difficulty not eaſily to be ſolved; it is reaſonable that we beſtow a little Pains upon the Examination of it: That we may ſee whether it carries any thing of ſtrict and juſt Argument along with it, or whether it be ſomething ſtarted purely to evade the force of the Argument, drawn from the Conſideration of the Danger theſe Gentlemen are in; and ſo to amuſe thoſe People, who otherwiſe might be inclined to think, that the *Chriſtians* reaſon with too much Advantage upon that Topick. There are three Things therefore, that are to be replied, in the general, to this Objection of theirs.

Firſt, That ſuppoſing it to be ever ſo certain and true, *it is nothing at all to the Purpoſe.*

Secondly,

Secondly, That it is, as to them, *abſolutely doubtful and precarious*; becauſe they have no *Principles* to make any poſitive Inference from.

Thirdly, That it is, in it ſelf, *palpably falſe and wrong*, as will appear upon an exact compariſon of the Circumſtances of the Caſe on both ſides, according as we ſuppoſe the Goſpel to be either a mere Fiction, or a Divine Revelation.

SECT. XXIX.

Firſt, I Say, That *their Objection of Danger to the* Chriſtians, *is nothing at all to the purpoſe.* For in the way of Argument, nothing is to the purpoſe but what has a real Tendency ſome way or other to help or benefit the Cauſe of that Party, who have a Difficulty preſſed on them; either by ſhewing that it is not ſo far expoſed, as the Adverſary's Argument makes it to be, or elſe that the Adverſary cannot argue in that manner he does, in making the Aſſault upon it. Now pray, how does this any way help the Cauſe of the *Deiſts*, who are evidently in very great Danger, if the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* be true, that the *Chriſtians* are obnoxious to as much Puniſhment, if the *Reſurrection* be not true? Suppoſe what they alledge to be granted, does it render their Condition leſs miſerable and perplexed? Does it take off any thing from the force of what the *Chriſtians* ſay, or hinder them from concluding what they intend? If it does not, to what End do theſe Gentlemen talk thus? Is this a Subject to be trifled with; and ſhould not Men ſpeak to the Purpoſe, if they ever intend to do it, when their Souls are concerned in the Argument? Were a Diſpute to be managed purely for a Trial of Skill; then to ſhuffle and digreſs from the Matter in hand, ſo as by any means whatſoever to blunder an Adverſary, and ſtop the Progreſs of his Argument, were a more pardonable piece of folly. But in a matter ſo grave

and ſerious as this, to talk off from the Point, and urge what can neither help on one ſide, nor hinder on the other; is acting a Part, that I am ſure all the right Reaſon and Prudence in the World muſt neceſſarily condemn.

SECT. XXX.

BEſides, I muſt ſay, that this proceeding of theirs is as *Diſingenuous*, as it is foreign to the Buſineſs in hand: For the Caſe ſtands thus.

The *Chriſtians* ſhew how very terrible and peremptory the Threatnings of the Goſpel are againſt the finally impenitent Deſpiſers of it: and they do this, not with a deſign to frighten theſe Gentlemen into Bigotry and Superſtition, as they pretend to imagine; but to excite them to a due care of themſelves, that they may eſcape that poſſible danger, of which the Goſpel gives them ſo very diſmal a proſpect. Now the moſt prudent and ingenuous way for theſe Gentlemen to go to work, after ſuch warning, would be to argue and enquire, and bring the matter to a ſtrict Examination; that ſo, if they found the *Chriſtians* had good Grounds and Reaſons for what they ſay, they might ſet themſelves to the uſe of proper Means, in order to make all things ſafe and ſecure on their own ſide; or if not then indeed having proved all to be mere Juggle and Deluſion, they might boldly charge the Fallacy upon the *Chriſtians*, and deſpiſe the danger they were threatned with, as the mere Bugbear of an Impoſture.

Whereas, inſtead of this, they immediately retort a charge of Idolatry and Irreligion upon us; and tell us, that if we are miſtaken, our Damnation will be as ſevere as theirs: As if they could be contented to be liable to be damned, upon one *Hypotheſis*, ſo the *Chriſtians* be but as much expoſed upon another. If a man, whoſe Life was really believed to be in danger, and was accordingly warned of it by his Neighbour, out of pure Love and Charity

Charity, ſhould reply after this faſhion, *That he ſhould reſt ſatisfy'd about that matter, ſince the Monitor himſelf, and a thouſand more, would be in as much danger of loſing their Lives, if ſuch and ſuch things ſhould happen to come to paſs:* Every one would ſay, this were ſurly and diſingenuous; and it might well be queſtion'd, whether the Man were in his right Wits or no. How nearly the Caſe I am ſpeaking of approaches to this, any Perſon may judge. However what I would remark under this firſt Head is, *That theſe Gentlemen go very far out of the Way of the Argument, to find an Occaſion to return an unkind Anſwer to a kind and friendly Admonition.* And there is certainly much more Reaſon why the *Chriſtians* ſhould begin to give them the Caution, than they ſhould give it to the *Chriſtians*; becauſe the latter have been in Poſſeſſion of this Doctrine for ſo long and uninterrupted a ſucceſſion of Ages, and it has all along been inculcated as a firſt Principle, *That a State of Unbelief is very dangerous.* But the *Hypotheſis* theſe Gentlemen advance, is a modern Fiction, and ſeems plainly to owe its riſe to an Apprehenſion of the Neceſſity of having ſuch a kind of Anſwer as ſhould make ſome Noiſe, ready to return to thoſe Perſons, who alarm them with a frightful Objection of everlaſting Puniſhments in the next World.

SECT. XXXI.

Secondly, THIS *Reaſoning of theirs is abſolutely precarious.*

If the Goſpel ſhould be an Impoſture, *you ſhall be puniſhed*, ſay they, *for believing it, and for paying a religious Worſhip to* Jeſus Chriſt.

But I would fain know upon what Grounds they adventure to conclude this? They will not pretend to *Revelation* for it; for ſuch Proof as that is quite out of their Way. And if they have no Revelation, we have none that ſays any ſuch thing.

Again, as they have no Revelation to argue from, ſo neither can they argue from the Divine Perfections, for the Neceſſity of ſuch Puniſhment. Some Sins, they allow, God will graciouſly forgive: Elſe what would become of *them*, as well as of *us?* And they believe alſo, that God Almighty will do it, without any thing of Satisfaction or Atonement to his infinite Juſtice: for otherwiſe, their Caſe were ſtill as bad, as if he would never forgive any Sins at all. Becauſe they declare againſt all Salvation, by the *way of Saviours and Sacrifices for Sin:* and they may be ſure of this, that if there be a *Saviour*, he will not make them happy againſt their Wills.

Now then, ſince every Sin whatſoever is an infinite Affront to the Perfections of the great Creator; and ſince theſe Gentlemen firmly believe, *that ſome Sins ſhall be pardoned*; and laſtly, Since they cannot pretend to be let into the Secrets of the Divine Counſels, to know what Sins will be forgiven, and what will not; it is impoſſible they ſhould ever be able juſtly to draw this peremptory Concluſion, *That the* Chriſtians *will be obnoxious to the Divine Vengeance upon the Score of that Sin, which they here lay to their Charge.*

For they cannot conclude, that it ſhall be puniſhed, either becauſe, and as it is a Sin; or becauſe and as it is a Sin of ſuch a particular kind or degree: And there is no third way for them to conclude. They cannot argue the firſt way: Becauſe in that caſe, Puniſhment muſt be co-extenſive with Sin, and ſo there would be no room for the Pardon of any. Nor can they argue the ſecond Way: Becauſe they cannot poſſibly determine what Kinds and Degrees of Sin the infinite Mercies of God will extend to forgive, and what ſhall be excepted from Pardon. We know that he will make gracious Allowances for the unavoidable Infirmities of his Creatures: And where Men go wrong, not out of Preſumption, or wilful affected Ignorance, and neglect of the Means that ſhould enable them to go right, but out of pure Misfortune

and

and Miſtake, which it is not in their Power to free themſelves from; in ſuch caſes there is good Ground to hope for Favour from thoſe tender Compaſſions of his, to which all that is kind and good, both in Angels and Men, bears no more Proportion than their Being does to his incomprehenſible Eſſence, which is no Proportion at all. And as the *Deiſts* cannot poſſibly imagine, *that we deſign and chuſe to be deluded in a matter that ſo nearly concerns us, as the Doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *does:* ſo joining this Conſideration with that of the *unbounded Goodneſs and Mercy of God*, they may find ſufficient Reaſon to forbear that harſh Sentence they pronounce upon us, in caſe we ſhould find ourſelves deceived at laſt.

SECT. XXXII.

IT is natural to conceive, that they will be ready to ask here, *Why it may not as well be ſuppoſed, that they ſhould be excuſed from Puniſhment upon the ſame ſcore, if matters ſhould be otherwiſe than they now imagine*, and the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *ſhould in the Iſſue appear to be a Truth?* For it may be alledged, *That they are no more willingly miſtaken, than we are; and that the infinite Mercy and Goodneſs of God, may as eaſily pardon a Deluſion on the one ſide as on the other.* To which, I ſay, may they have all the Intereſt in the Favour and Compaſſion of Heaven, that their own moſt enlarged Deſires and Wiſhes can extend to; and I add, infinitely more!

But they muſt of neceſſity allow this, that we can be much ſurer, upon one *Hypotheſis*, how matters will go with them, if they are miſtaken, than they can pretend to be, of what will be the Conſequence of our Deception. For if the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* be true, then here is a Divine Revelation, which pronounces the Sententence of Unbelievers; ſo that if theſe Gentlemen continue in ſuch a State, they may know what their Doom

ſhall

ſhall be, from the expreſs Words of the great and awful Judge of Heaven and Earth himſelf. But on the other ſide, whether that Doctrine be true or falſe, there is no Revelation to ſhew what the *Chriſtians* are to expect at the hands of Divine Juſtice. The *Deiſts* indeed ſay, they ſhall be puniſhed ſeverely; but there is only their Word for it, without any manner of Reaſon or Authority to ſupport what they ſay: For I have already ſhewn, that the Argument they offer to prove it, will not, nor cannot poſſibly conclude what they intend. By all the Laws of right Reaſon in the World, their Concluſion is unjuſt, and will never follow. And therefore they ought not to make it, unleſs they reſolve to allow themſelves to affirm right or wrong, juſt what ſerves their own Turn. So that here is a Certainty of the Event or Conſequence in one *Hypotheſis*; and no more than bare Gueſs and Conjecture in the other. And I hope upon this account, we may be much more poſitive in the former Caſe, than they, without diſclaiming all Reaſon and Modeſty, can pretend to be in the latter.

SECT. XXXIII.

I Know that theſe Gentlemen are very apt to entertain themſeves with fine Notions of the Mercy and Goodneſs of God; as if theſe lovely Attributes were a full and perfect Security againſt all the Effects of Anger and Diſpleaſure; and that Threatnings are given out for no other Purpoſe, but only to keep Men in awe, and engage them to their Duty: So that even tho' the Goſpel ſhould prove true at laſt, yet God, out of his infinite Tenderneſs for his Creatures, would forbear to execute that Vengeance which is there threatned to Unbelievers, and reckon it enough to have ſcared them a little in the preſent World. But it will by no means be ſafe or prudent for them to truſt to ſuch an *Hypotheſis* as this. For ſince they have not

not been kept in awe, nor been engaged to the performance of what will appear to have been their Duty; I think they have all the reaſon in the World to fear, leſt the threatnings ſhould lay hold of them, unleſs they believe their Maker deſigned only to jeſt and trifle with Mankind, by poſſeſſing them with vain and ridiculous Fears, and amuſing them with falſe Proſpects of things.

Beſides, what buſineſs have we with the *ſecret* Will of God? It is plain, that by arguing upon this, we only wade into a depth which is infinitely beyond our fathoming; and where, after all our vain Searches, we can find no bottom to raiſe any Schemes or *Hypotheſes* upon. If God has revealed his Mind and Will, we have ſomething to truſt to there: And I think, it is as unpardonable a Preſumption, to fancy he will not do what he has poſitively ſaid he will do, as it is to ſuppoſe, that he will do a thouſand kind indulgent things in favour of us, which he has never given us the leaſt Encouragement to hope for. We ought to conſider him as the juſt and holy Governour of the World, and as ſuch, infinitely tender of the Honour of his Government, as well as the gracious Author of our Beings, and the liberal Diſpenſer of good things to us: And therefore, when he gives Laws to Mankind, and annexes threatnings, as well as Promiſes, to enforce the Obedience of them; that he no more deſigned to terrify Men by mere imaginary Puniſhments, than to allure and intice them by the hopes of empty chimerical Rewards. Amongſt us Men, Rewards and Puniſhments are equally neceſſary to ſupport the Credit and Reputation of a Government. For as the one is needful to give Virtue its due Encouragement, and to engage the Brave and the Good to all thoſe Offices that may be of publick Benefit and Service; ſo is the other as neceſſary to ſecure the Laws and Legiſlator from that Contempt, which the continual Encroachments of unpuniſhed, and therefore ſucceſsful, Vice, would infallibly expoſe both unto. And tho

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it is not to be imagined, that the infinite God ſhould be tied up to the Rules and Meaſures of Creatures; yet we ought to remember, *that nothing is impoſſible to him, but what involves ſome real Imperfection.* Now in the Nature of the thing, it involves no Imperfection to puniſh a Sinner. It may be a Perfection to pardon in many Caſes, where Puniſhment is deſerved; but it can be no Imperfection to inflict Puniſhment in any caſe, where the Sentence of a moſt righteous and equitable Law, as whatever is enacted by the Divine Authority muſt be, pronounces it to be due. And tho' it be a much more ſoft and pleaſing notion of infinite Goodneſs, to conſider it apart from infinite Juſtice and Holineſs, and from all the other Attributes that tend to poſſeſs us with Dread and Aſtoniſhment; yet all theſe in God, are but his pure and ſimple Eſſence: And if we divide them from one another in our Conceptions, we think no longer of the true and living God, but of ſome imperfect Idol of our own making. It is no leſs true of him, and therefore no leſs to be thought of by us, that he is ſtrict and impartial Juſtice, as well as boundleſs and inexhauſtible Love.

SECT. XXXIV.

Thirdly, WHAT the *Deiſts* object, is ſo far from being true, that the contrary to it is moſt apparently true and certain, *viz. That they are vaſtly more and worſe expoſed, if the Doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *be true*; *than the* Chriſtians *can be, upon any Account whatſoever, if that Doctrine be falſe.*

I here make the hardeſt Suppoſition that can be made on the ſide of the *Chriſtians*, viz. *That if the Goſpel be an Impoſture, they ſhould be liable to Puniſhment for believing it.* However, I chuſe to argue upon it, that theſe Gentlemen may ſee, that whatever Conceſſions we make, their Condition remains infinitely involved and perplexed; and that they do not rightly conſult the Advantage of their own

own Cauſe, by giving us an Occaſion to enquire ſo far into theſe matters.

SECT. XXXV.

Firſt, IF this Doctrine be true, *Theſe Gentlemen are obnoxious to the ſentence of the law of Nature, and the Goſpel too: And if they ſuffer, muſt ſuffer as Tranſgreſſors of both.*

Let them have the ſlighteſt Notions poſſible of the Law of *Nature*, yet the Goſpel eſtabliſhes the Divine Authority of it, and alſo makes it a Law ſpecificially diſtinct; tho it be comprehended, together with the *Evangelical* Law, in that Volume, which makes up the Chriſtian Revelation. And therefore, if it prove true at laſt, that our Bible was a divinely inſpired Book, it will be true alſo, that this Law of Nature was in full force; and therefore that theſe Gentlemen were ſtrictly obliged to the Practice of all the Duties enjoined thereby, and muſt conſequently be anſwerable to God for the neglect of the ſame. But as the Goſpel is a Diſpenſation of a far nobler Nature, and teaches ſo many Doctrines and Duties of the utmoſt Conſequence to the Glory of God, and the Welfare of Mankind; here is a more diſmal and terrible Charge to be brought in from hence againſt theſe Perſons, who inſtead of receiving it with the Reverence and Humility owing to a Revelation from Heaven, and giving up themſelves to a ſincere and faithful Obedience to the Precepts of it, have made it all Cheat and Impoſture, deſpiſed the Threatnings, vilified the Duties, and turned all the Myſteries of it into Jeſt and Ridicule. Surely if unpardoned Sins againſt the Law of Nature will bring down heavy Vengeance upon the Sinner's Head; theſe Sins of ſo deep a Dye againſt the Goſpel will call for ſevenfold. If ſuch, whoſe only Accuſation at the Bar of the ſupreme Judge is, that they have abuſed the Light of Reaſon, ſhall be thought worthy of the Chaſtiſement of Whips; what leſs than *Scor-*

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pions, ſharp arrows of the Almighty, with Coals of *Juniper*, can they expect, who have ſhut their Eyes againſt the brighteſt Manifeſtations of God's Will, that they might expoſe them with more confidence in the dark? And if the former Guilt alone will be ſo exceedingly heavy, what will it be when added to this, which is of ſo much more heinous and complicated a Nature? When the ſentences of Law and Goſpel, ſhall both conſpire to condemn a Man to Puniſhment; ſuch Condemnation muſt needs be ſad, and ſuch Doom intolerable! And tho theſe Gentlemen have yet time before them to prevent all this, nay, and time to render their Conditions truly happy, if they will themſelves; yet it is neceſſary to be thus plain and free with them, that they may ſee in what poſture their matters will ſtand upon the *Hypotheſis* of the Truth of the Goſpel.

SECT. XXXVI.

NOW on the other hand, if the *Chriſtians* be miſtaken and the Goſpel be not a divine Revelation, they can be accountable by no Law, but that of *Nature* only. For tho, if the Goſpel were true, they muſt then ſtand or fall, according as their Behaviour has been conformable or diſconformable to the Tenour thereof; yet if it be a deluſion, it is moſt certain that it will never be made the rule of divine Judgment. And therefore, I ſay, that upon this *Hypotheſis* the *Chriſtians* are entirely upon the Foundation of the pure Law of Nature: and the great enquiry that will proceed at laſt with reſpect to them, will be, *how they have diſcharged their duty with reſpect to the Injunctions of that Law.* So that the very miſtake of receiving the Goſpel as a Divine Revelation, when it was not ſo; and all the conſequences of that miſtake, in the ſeveral Rites and Services they have performed; together with whatever Guilt they have incurred by tranſgreſſing the

Rules

Rules of the Goſpel, which they erroneouſly believed they were indiſpenſably obliged to obſerve: All theſe will fall under the Cognizance of the natural Law; not only for the Cauſe above-mentioned, *that the Goſpel*, in the preſent Suppoſition, *can have nothing at all to do in the trying and judging of Men*; but alſo, becauſe it is what the Law of Nature does properly and immediately conſider; in that all depends upon the juſt uſe of Man's Reaſon and Underſtanding, and runs up to this Queſtion at laſt, *Whether he has behaved himſelf as a Creature, endowed with a principle of Judgment and Choice, ought to have done.* For when a thing is propoſed as a Revelation from God, it ought to be carefully conſidered and examined, whether it carries a ſtamp of divine Authority along with it or no, which is not the work of *Faith*, but of Reaſon and Thought. And when afterwards a Man's Conſcience is convinced, and he has actually embraced a Doctrine or Diſpenſation as from Heaven, he is obliged, tho thro Ignorance he be miſtaken in it, to conform himſelf to the Rules of it: and he is guilty of an abuſe of his Conſcience and Reaſon, when he does not, as long as the Conviction of his Mind continues; becauſe he ſubverts the order that God has eſtabliſhed in the reaſonable nature of Man, by offering Violence to a Power ſet up by God himſelf, to be a guide to, and a guard upon our actions. So that it is as clear as any thing can be, that the *Chriſtians* upon one *Hypotheſis*, are accountable only by the Law of Nature; and therefore, have a much leſs perplexed and dangerous reckoning to make, than theſe Gentlemen have, who upon the other *Hypotheſis*, muſt anſwer whatever charges are brought in againſt them, both by *Law* and *Goſpel* too.

SECT. XXXVII.

Secondly, THERE *are ſome heinous and very aggravating Circumſtances attending the Incredulity of the* Deiſts, *which are wholly impoſſible in the Caſe of the Chriſti-*

Chriſtians: And therefore the Danger they are expoſed to is proportionably greater.

They cannot but be conſcious to themſelves of what I mean, ſince they know well enough, what horrid Work has been made amongſt them, with all things that relate to the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*. I ſhall not need to tell them, how far they have preſumed to go in their Remarks, upon the Birth and Life, the Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of our Bleſſed Saviour; the Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Inſpiration of the Apoſtles, together with all the miracles wrought to ſeal the Truth and Divine Authority of the Chriſtian Faith. In ſome of theſe Articles I believe, they have out-done the very *Scribes* and *Phariſees*. However, I make no doubt to ſay, that in Chriſtian Countries *Chriſt* has ſuffered, at leaſt as much as from thoſe that crucify'd him. Theſe indeed nailed his Body to the Tree; but that direful Action was committed but once; whereas the other repeat the Crime, crucifying him to themſelves afreſh every day, and putting him to open ſhame. The *Mahometans*, who honour him with the venerable Titles of the * *Word and Power of God*; would not hear without an Exceſs of Horror, how he is treated by thoſe who are baptized into his Name. And tho' they believe very differently from what we do, yet their own Prophet has taught them ſo much reſpect, and ſo high an Eſteem for ours; that ſhould they be Witneſſes to the Affronts we offer him here, they would be ready to revenge them upon us. This is certain, that the Enemies of *Chriſt Jeſus* muſt not talk of him to thoſe People at the rate they do to one another. And I think it is very hard, that *Turks and Arabians*, that *Moors* and other People, upon whom we ſo freely beſtow the Name of Barbarians and Infidels, ſhould need to be called in for Monitors to teach Men, that call themſelves *Chriſtians*, good Manners in ſuch a Caſe as this.

Now theſe Gentldmen ſhould conſider, *That if they happen to be in the Wrong, here is all this, over and above the*

* *Elmacin. Hiſt. Sacracen. C. 7. P. 3. Edit. Lugd. Batav.*

grand

grand Miſtake, to be accounted for. It is not only the bare Deception, that will be laid to their Charge; that is, taking the Goſpel for an Impoſture, when it was indeed a Divine Revelation, and believing *Chriſt Jeſus* to be a Deceiver, when he was in reality the Saviour of Mankind: But beſides that, there is the Spleen and Malignity of their Unbelief, the virulent Satire and Reproach with which they have perſecuted his Name and Character, and blaſted the Religion he has eſtabliſh'd in the World. They have not been contented to deny the Divine Authority of the Goſpel themſelves, but have propagated their Prejudices in the moſt invidious and diſgraceful manner, made Parties to flout and ſcoff at *Chriſtianity*, and open'd as many *Mouths* to rail at the Author of it, as they poſſibly could. Now this is flagrant beyond all poſſibility of Excuſe. Men may be enemies to an opinion, without Rancour and laborious Malice; and an Error is prodigiouſly heightened, by being accompanied with ſuch Circumſtances as theſe. But on the other hand, if we ſuppoſe the *Chriſtians* to be deluded in this grand Point, there is nothing of this black and heinous Nature in their miſtake, it conſiſts in a wrong placed Zeal and Devotion, but it is infinitely remote from all evil Affections. Such Aggravations as inſult and bid defiance to Heaven are utterly incompatible with it. If the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection* be falſe, the *Chriſtians* have paid Divine Honours where they were not due; and if the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection* be true, have not theſe Gentlemen refuſed to pay them where they were due? If the former be Idolatry, what ſort of Name muſt we give the latter? Is it leſs than Sacrilege to rob God of his Honour? Is it ſhort of Blaſphemy to make his Son and Meſſenger an Impoſtor? Now ſuppoſe theſe Charges on each ſide to balance one another; yet there are diſmal Circumſtances on the part of the *Deiſts* which will infallibly turn the Scale. Let miſtaken *Blaſphemy* be oppoſed to miſtaken *Idolatry*; yet the endleſs Catalogue of Outrages and Af-

fronts which comes in with the former, and is impoſſible in the latter Caſe, does, I think, make the ſcores very far from being equal on both ſides. In ſhort, their Sin is of a terrible Complexion, and fearfully aggravated; which can never be ſaid with any Truth of the Crime which they object to the *Chriſtians*.

And therefore they muſt pardon us, if we inſiſt upon it, *That for this very Reaſon, the Conſequences of their Deception muſt needs be incomparably more dangerous and fatal, than thoſe of ours.*

SECT. XXXVIII.

BESIDE all this, it is to be conſider'd too, That *the* Chriſtians, upon the *Hypotheſis* that they are deceived, *have never made any Advantage by their Miſtake, with reſpect to the preſent World; but inſtead of gaining more Pleaſure and Liberty, have expoſed themſelves to incomparably greater Sufferings, and endured more ungrateful Confinements than any other ſort of Men.* But Matters are quite otherwiſe with the *Deiſts*; *for they make their Belief that the Goſpel is an Impoſture turn to a very good Account, and ſerve them to many uſeful Purpoſes in the preſent Life:* And this makes their Caſe much leſs compaſſionable, if the Goſpel ſhould prove to be a Divine Revelation, than that of the *Chriſtians*, if it ſhould be an Impoſture. For thoſe that have been miſerable under a Miſtake, are vaſtly greater Objects of Pity, than thoſe who have made uſe of that Error to enjoy a World of Pleaſures, which without it they could never have done.

SECT. XXXIX.

BUT to conclude, the great Point that ſhould employ our beſt Thoughts and Cares on both ſides, is, *Who have the moſt ſolid and rational Grounds to ſupport the Belief*

they

they adhere to; *whether they who take this Doctrine for a Deluſion, or we who receive it as a Divine Truth?* For this Rule muſt be laid down as a thing of the utmoſt Conſequence both to them and to us, *viz.* that by the eternal Laws of Juſtice and right Reaſon, which the Author of all things, who is abſolute eſſential Reaſon and Juſtice, will obſerve in dealing with all his Creatures, the Puniſhments inflicted on Men, for their bad Conduct in the Matters of their Salvation, will be proportion'd to their want of care and diligence to inform themſelves aright, and to argue rationally upon thoſe Informations. And therefore, that thoſe Perſons are certain to fare the worſt who have examin'd things the leaſt, made the leaſt obvious and natural Deductions from them; and who have gone the fartheſt out of the way of all the Methods of Reaſoning univerſally receiv'd amongſt mankind; either to believe what they ought not to have believed, or to make themſelves Unbelievers in a Caſe where their Faith was required.

From whence we will draw this *Corollary: That if the* Chriſtians *have a more fair and rational Plea to make at laſt, before the Divine Tribunal, for their Belief of the* Reſurrection of Chriſt, *ſuppoſing it to be a Fiction, than the* Deiſts *can make for their Infidelity, ſuppoſing the* Reſurrection *to be a real Truth; then theſe Gentlemen will be more ſadly expoſed if the* Reſurrection of Chriſt *be a Truth, than the* Chriſtians *can be if it proves to be otherwiſe.*

Therefore what remains for them to do, is, to inquire with all poſſible Care into the Grounds of their Denial of this ſo important a Point, the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt:* And comparing thoſe Reaſons with the others, upon which the *Chriſtians* are perſuaded to believe it, to ſee whether they do not deviate vaſtly more from all the Methods of Reaſoning univerſally approved and eſtabliſhed among Men, by their Denial, than the *Chriſtians* do by their Aſſent: For if they do, their Danger is as much greater, as the Irrationality of their Proceed-

ing is more. And if the *Chriſtians* in believing this Doctrine are found to argue upon thoſe *ſure Principles* which the unprejudic'd Reaſon of Mankind, and the Laws of the World we live in, do both conſpire to juſtify; then ſince thoſe Gentleman cannot poſſibly proceed upon the ſame Principles to disbelieve it, it is plain, that they are moſt deſperately expoſed as long as they continue in their Unbelief. Let them therefore bring this matter that I propoſe to a fair Trial, and do it with infinitely more Zeal and Application, than they would ſearch after any Truth in *Philoſophy*, from the Diſcovery of which, they could expect the greateſt Glory, and the Applauſe of all the learned World. And I hope the following Diſcourſe may be of ſome uſe to help them to make this great Experiment without Prejudice; and as becomes Men, who have only Truth in view, and believe it is a Matter of ſome Importance to find it out in the preſent Caſe.

The End of the Firſt Part.

PART

PART II.

Containing the General Principles on which the Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection *is eſtabliſhed.*

The CONTENTS.

The Nature of an Evidence, which is obligatory to Human Underſtanding, ſtated and demonſtrated.
Concerning Moral Evidence and Certainty.
The Differences between this and Mathematical Certainty.
The obligatory Nature of Moral Proofs.
The abſurd and intolerable Conſequences that follow upon the taking away, or diſowning ſuch Evidence.

SECT. I.

HAVING hitherto prepared the Way to our great Deſign, by ſome ſhort Diſcourſe on ſuch Heads, as ſeemed fit to poſſeſs both *Chriſtians* and *Deiſts* with a juſt Senſe of the Importance of the Matter in Diſpute: I ſhall now proceed to ſhew theſe Gentlemen, what Principle I intend to make uſe of, in order to evince to them the

unqueſtionable Certainty of the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

And this Principle, in general is, *The Evidence afforded for it, from whence the Truth of this Doctrine may be fairly and juſtly inferred.*

And therefore, in the firſt Place, I argue thus: *That there is ſuch an Evidence for the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *as actually induces an Obligation on all Men,* to whom that Evidence is fairly propoſed, and who are capable of arguing upon it, after a due and regular Manner, *to give their Aſſent to it as a certain Truth.* Having laid down this Propoſition, my next Step is to the Conſideration of the infinite Perfections of the *Great Author and Governour of the Univerſe*; which theſe Gentlemen, by their Principles, are no leſs forward to own and adore, than the *Chriſtians* themſelves are.

And here I muſt advance this Propoſition, *That it is utterly impoſſible, that the Supreme Governour of the World* (whoſe juſt and wiſe Providence preſides over all Things, and more eſpecially over the Affairs and Concerns of reaſonable Beings) *ſhould ever countenance a notorious Falſhood with ſuch an Evidence, as ſhould lay an indiſpenſible Obligation on rational Creatures to give their Aſſent to it, as a real Truth.*

SECT. II.

NOW from both theſe together we ſhall be able to infer the main Concluſion with all the Force and Perſpicuity that can be. For if there be *ſuch an Evidence* for the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; and if the Perfections of God Almighty will not ſuffer or allow that a Deluſion ſhould be recommended to the World with *ſuch an Evidence:* It will fairly follow, *That this Doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *is not a Deluſion, but a certain Truth*; or that it was undoubted Matter of Fact, *that*

that he did riſe from the Dead. For if it had not been Matter of Fact, it had been impoſſible that a Being of infinite Truth, Juſtice and Goodneſs, ſuch as the *Deiſts* tell us they believe God to be, ſhould ever have ſuffered it to paſs amongſt Men with *ſuch an Evidence*, as, by all the Laws of human Nature, and the World wherein we live, *ſhould lay an indiſpenſible Obligation on every capable Subject, to whom this Doctrine is repreſented with its proper Evidences, to receive it as a certain Truth.*

This is the Scheme I intend to proceed upon, and the Conſequence of it will be this: That if I produce ſolid and truly rational Proof for the Propoſitions I have laid down, theſe Gentlemen will be obliged, either at once to throw off all Natural Religion, and rank themſelves among thoſe Unbelievers of the loweſt Form, who deny the Being and Perfections of a God; or elſe by granting theſe Propoſitions, to grant the Concluſion likewiſe, and ſo admitting the Truth of this Doctrine, give us an Occaſion of rejoicing with them, upon the Score of the happy Change of their Minds.

To ſet this Argument therefore in a clear and convincing Light, theſe four things muſt be diſtinctly done.

Firſt, *To ſhew what is meant by ſuch an Evidence, as does infallibly oblige every capable Subject, to whom it is juſtly and duly repreſented, to receive a Thing as Truth and Matter of Fact, for the Proof of which, ſuch Evidence is alledged.*

Secondly, *To demonſtrate, that an Evidence ſo qualified, as I ſhall now explain, and repreſented in ſuch Manner, and to ſuch a Subject, as I have already ſuppoſed; does actually oblige to a full and firm Belief of a Thing propoſed, as real Truth and Matter of Fact.*

Thirdly, *That it is impoſſible the Divine Providence ſhould ever countenance an Impoſture* (or which is the ſame Thing, permit or ſuffer it to be countenanced) *with an Evidence of ſuch a Nature as this.*

Fourthly, *That there is actually ſuch an Evidence for the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *as does fully come up to all the Characters and Conditions of an Evidence, which directly obliges Human Underſtanding to yield its aſſent.* I ſhall allot this Second Part of this Treatiſe to the three firſt of theſe Heads; and beſtow the third entirely upon the fourth and laſt of them.

SECT. III.

FOR the *Firſt*, The Evidence I here intend, may be thus deſcribed.

It it ſuch, as being impartially weighed and conſidered by the free Uſe of a Man's Reaſon, in all the common and allowed ways of uſing it; does not only more powerfully perſuade him to a Belief of the Thing propoſed, than any Objections to the contrary, when duly ſtated and ſet in a fair Light, can diſſuade him from the Belief of that Thing; but alſo ſuch, which if a Man ſhould diſown and reject, he muſt neceſſarily be forced upon ſuch ſort of Conſequences, as the genuine and diſintereſted Senſe of Mankind would condemn as abſurd and wrong; and which even the Perſon himſelf concerned, without making uſe of ſome bad Arts, by which his Underſtanding may be ſuppoſed to be managed contrary to its native Tendency, would not be able to digeſt, when he came to examine and reflect upon them in a cool and well-diſpoſed Temper. So that upon a juſt and cautious balancing of the *Momenta* on both ſides, *viz. The force of the Evidence, and that of the Objections*; a Man finds the former ſufficient to furniſh all thoſe Reaſons for the Aſſent of his Mind, that the Nature and Conditions of the Caſe propoſed will admit of; and that the latter are not ſufficient to take off or invalidate ought of thoſe Reaſons: And that therefore, in a fair and regular way of proceeding, without Sophiſtry, Prejudice,

judice, or any unnatural Straining for a Concluſion, he may proceed to conclude Matters to be in a Reality, according as the Evidence propounded does repreſent them to be.

In a word, Whatſoever Evidence in any caſe affords all thoſe *Media*, which are neceſſary to make a perſpicuous natural Concluſion, and to ſolve whatever Difficulties occur, upon ſuch Principles as, in all reſembling Caſes, Mankind univerſally agree to argue themſelves into a juſt Aſſurance and Satisfaction by: Such an Evidence, I ſay, does actually oblige every Perſon, who is duly informed of the Nature of it, and is capable of arguing in a juſt and regular Manner thereupon; to aſſent to the Thing propoſed, as real Truth and Matter of Fact.

SECT. IV.

AS to the Evidence I have here deſcribed, there are theſe Things to be obſerved concerning it.

Firſt, *That this is not the Evidence which accompanies ſtrict and perfect Demonſtration; as Demonſtration is underſtood by the Logicians or Mathematicians.* For tho' all accurate Demonſtration muſt neceſſarily have ſuch Properties as theſe; yet every kind of Proof that has theſe Properties, is not accurate Demonſtration: Becauſe compleat Demonſtration does in its own Nature involve and require ſome peculiar Conditions, which can by no means agree to ſome other ſorts of Proof, which yet may come up to all thoſe Conditions, that the Evidence I have deſcribed does comprehend.

SECT. V.

Secondly, *AND therefore, an Evidence of this Nature does not force or extort the Aſſent of the Underſtanding, as that of rigid Demonſtration does.*

How

How the Mind is influenced by Demonſtration, and how by other ſort of Proof; I ſhall diſcourſe more at large by and by: In the mean time, this muſt be laid down as an undoubted Rule, *That ſome Proofs may oblige us to yield the Aſſent of our Underſtandings, which yet do not extort that Aſſent from us*; *or* (ſpeaking in the common Senſe of the Philoſophers) *inevitably compel us to yield it.* Every one will know what ſort of Compulſion it is that I do, and muſt, intend here: *It is ſuch as the Underſtanding ſuffers, when a juſt and accurate Demonſtration is propounded to it.* The Power of ſuch Proof as this is plainly irreſiſtible. It will not ſuffer the Mind to remain in Doubt or Suſpence, but with a ſuperior Authority exacts its Aſſent, and reduces it to a Compliance. Inſtead of exerting a contrary Act of Diſſent, we cannot remain indifferent in ſuch a Caſe as this; but yield we muſt, even tho' it be never ſo contrary to our Inclinations. The Reaſon of this is from the *ſpecifical Nature* of thoſe ſort of Proofs we call Demonſtrations; which proceeding from ſuch Principles as are moſt deeply radicated in our Minds, and perfectly congenial with them, they aſſault us with ſomething drawn from the inmoſt Receſſes of our own Conſtitution, and ſo make their Way into us with Speed and Facility.

Other Proofs there are, whoſe Principles, tho' ſtrictly congruous and ſuitable to our rational Natures, yet are not ſo near a-kin to them as the former; and therefore do not inſinuate themſelves into us with that wonderful eaſe and advantage, that thoſe of ſtrict Demonſtration do. From whence it comes to paſs, that there is more Scope left us to argue and enquire about them; to examine the Congruity and juſt Connection of the Premiſes one with another, and their Tendency to infer a convincing legitimate Concluſion: Which Diſquiſition is incomparably abridged, and even almoſt quite prevented, in the caſe of rigid Demonſtration, by the naturalneſs of the Principles, and the bright eaſy way of diſpoſing

and

and linking them with one another. However, theſe other Proofs (I will not ſay may perſuade, for that is not the Caſe, but) may peremptorily oblige the Aſſent of our Minds; tho' they do not command it in that magiſterial Way, that ſcientifical or demonſtrative ones do. For they may preſent Truth to us by ſuch a Concatenation of Steps and Conſequences, as may render it abſolutely juſt and rational for us to acknowledge and receive it as ſuch; tho' the Proceſs be different from thoſe, which are formed by the ſtrict Rules of Logick or Mathematicks. And if they may do this, they may oblige: For we are under an *eternal Obligation* to act juſtly and rationally.

I have hitherto ſhewn, in theſe two Particulars, what is not intended or aſſerted in the Evidence mentioned.

To ſhew therefore what I do intend by it; I ſay,

SECT. VI.

Thirdly, *THAT which I have deſcribed, is ſuch an Evidence in general, as obliges the Underſtanding of a reaſonable Creature to yield its Aſſent in all Caſes where we have not the Teſtimony of Senſe or rigorous Demonſtration to convince us of the Truth of things.*

And, I ſay farther, that no ſort of Evidence below or ſhort of this is ſufficient to engage the Aſſent of our Minds; has Force or Authority enough to challenge us as rational Creatures, to receive that as Truth, for the Proof of which, ſuch Evidence is alledged. An Evidence of an inferior Character may repreſent Things ſo far plauſible and credible, as to be a ſufficient Ground for us to proceed upon in ordinary Caſes; but it does not lay an *Obligation*, or make it ſtrictly juſt and neceſſary for us to yield the Aſſent of our Underſtandings, and receive thoſe Things as poſitively true and real. Becauſe no Conſiderations can be ſufficient Grounds for the entire

entire Acquieſcency and Repoſe of our Minds in any thing as Truth; but ſuch as are plain and perſpicuous, will hold firm and good under all Examinations, and are no way liable to ſolid rational Exceptions.

SECT VII.

I ſhall now, in the ſecond Place, demonſtrate the obligatory Nature of an Evidence which is thus qualified, or which comes up to theſe Conditions. And this I ſhall do from theſe two general Conſiderations, *viz. The Conſtitution of Human Nature*; *and the ſtrict Obligations we lie under to own or ſubmit to moral Proof and Evidence.* Theſe Topicks will abundantly furniſh us with Matter to conclude the indiſpenſible Obligation ſuch an Evidence lays on Mankind.

I ſhall begin the Argument from the firſt of theſe Conſiderations, namely, *The Frame and Conſtitution of Human Nature.* And that I may do this with more Advantage, it will not be amiſs to divide the Work into theſe three Branches.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew, *That the infinitely perfect and glorious Author of our Being muſt needs have eſtabliſhed a certain Law or Order in the reaſonable Nature of Man, with reſpect to the Acts and Operations of his Mind*; *according to which he ſhould be obliged to exert his Faculties upon proper Motives and Inducements, when preſented to him.* That he would not fail, in our very Creation, to make ſuitable Impreſſions upon our Natures for that end and purpoſe; and conſequently not leave us to acquire Diſpoſitions and Inclinations to act as intelligent Creatures ſhould do; merely from Art and Education, from Cuſtom and Practice, or the Examples of others.

Secondly, *That however Human Nature be ſo made and conſtituted, yet it is in our Power to invert that Order, or to proceed contrary to the Obligation of that Law, which God has eſtabliſhed in us.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *I ſhall evince that it is apparently agreeable to that Order, which God has eſtabliſhed in the reaſonable Nature of Man; and that it muſt of Neceſſity be according to his original Intent and Deſign* (in giving us ſuch a Power, as that we call Underſtanding) *that we ſhould yield the Aſſent thereof, or receive Things as true, upon ſuch an Evidence as I have already deſcribed.*

And from hence it will be an unavoidable Conſequence, that an Evidence of this Nature whenever propounded to us, ought not to leave us heſitating and indifferent; but, as it does in the Nature of things oblige us, ſo it ſhould fully determine us, actually to yield our Aſſent.

SECT. VIII.

I Begin with the firſt of theſe *Propoſitions*, which being the Foundation on which the preſent Argument is built, requires that we beſtow ſome particular Care and Application upon the Proof of it.

Whether it be what the *Deiſts* would ſolemnly and poſitively deny or no (at leaſt *all* of them) I will neither affirm, nor am I concerned to know. I am ſure it is of great Importance to me; and how plain ſoever it may appear, it is not ſelf-evident; and theſe are ſufficient Grounds to juſtify a formal Proof of it. Beſides, it is a common Practice with ſome People to be as ready to deny, whatever is not made manifeſtly abſurd for them to deny; as to diſclaim all Doubt about it, when once they ſee it ſo well proved, that it muſt be ridiculous for them to do ſo. In order to the clearing this Point therefore, I ſhall offer the following Conſiderations.

Firſt, *It caſts an Imputation of downright Folly and Imprudence, or of Weakneſs and Impotence on God, to ſuppoſe him to make any ſort of Being ſo, as to be unfit to anſwer what muſt be his End in creating ſuch a Being, if we allow him to have any End at all therein.*

For

For what End and Purpoſe, for Example, is ſuch a Creature, as what we call a rational one, made? Every one muſt grant, *that it was to act rationally and intelligently, as a Creature of ſuch a Rank and Order ought to do.* But for any Being to act without proper Qualifications for Action, is a Contradiction. And Principles of Action, are indiſpenſibly neceſſary Qualifications for it. And original Diſpoſitions or Inclinations to act are the certain and undoubted Principles of Action, If ſo; then I ask in the next place, *Would the Author of Nature have obtained the proper and direct End of creating ſuch a Creature as Man, by giving him a bare rational Capacity, and ſending him into the World, wholly unfurniſhed of all thoſe determinate Principles of Action, which belong to him* (not as an Animal only, but) *as an intelligent Creature?* No; but he would have left the moſt *beautiful and excellent Part of his Work undone?* Becauſe, *Being or Capacity*, fitted to diſplay itſelf by ſuitable *Acts and Operations*, includes ſomething infinitely more noble, than ſtill inactive Being or Capacity without it. Add to this, *That all wiſe Agents do not only propoſe a certain Scope and Deſign to themſelves in what they do, but intend alſo to render the Effects of their Skill actually uſeful and ſerviceable for ſomething; by puttiug them out of their Hands in ſuch a Condition, that that Uſefulneſs may diſcover itſelf.* And will he who is perfect in Wiſdom do leſs? A rational Nature, undiſpoſed, unfitted to exert and diſplay itſelf in a Courſe of ſuitable Operations, is an imperfect unaccountable Something: It is not a finiſhed Creature, but the Out-lines or rude Draught of one. It is ſuch an Embryo, as could never come out of the Hands of that God, who is wiſe in Heart, and wonderful in Counſel; who leaves none of his Works for our after-poliſhing aud correcting; but makes them all at firſt worthy of our higheſt Praiſe and Admiration. But this leads me to conſider,

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Secondly, *THAT it is farther a particular Reflection upon the infinite Perfections of God to ſuppoſe that he has left us to acquire Diſpoſitions and Inclinations to act as intelligent Creatures ſhould do; by ſuch uncertain, deſpicable, and precarious Means, as Education, Cuſtom, and the Examples of others in the World.*

For at this rate, it is not God, but *we* that make up the Man. He only furniſhes a proper Subſtance, but, according to this *Hypotheſis*, leaves it intirely to our Diſpoſal to infuſe Principles into it, and dreſs it up for a rational Agent, as we ſhall think fit. That which renders our Nature truly noble and lovely is its exerting itſelf in ſo many fine and wonderful ways of Operation. The various Acts of the Underſtanding about *Truth*, the Efforts and Tendencies of the Will to *Good*; how excellent are they, and how admirably fitted to the End of making us eaſy and happy? And can our Teaching, or all the Examples we give, mould Human Nature into ſo beautiful a Frame; ſhew the Mind how to argue and conclude, and direct the other Powers to their ſeveral Objects? It is the higheſt degree of Impiety and Preſumption to imagine, *that any ſuch Work as this was ever intended for our Art and Induſtry to perform.* And beſides, if we conſider the Folly and Weakneſs, the Raſhneſs and Precipitancy, the Partiality and ill Management that has all along prevailed amongſt mankind; we ſhall eaſily be induced to conclude, without any more ado, *that God never deſigned to leave us in one anothers Hands.* To adorn and furniſh out a reaſonable Creature, who is to glorify his Maker, and bear a uſeful Part in the Employments of Life by the Means of thoſe Qualifications; is an Office of two much importance ever to be committed to Parents, Nurſes, and

and School-Masters, or any other inferior Managers of Human Nature.

SECT. X.

Thirdly, IT is farther to be consider'd, *That this Hypothesis quite takes away the moral Government of God, and supposes him to rule Men by no other Laws, than those by which he commands the brutal and inanimate Part of the Creation.* For if he that is the Author of our Nature does not make such Impressions on it, as should dispose and prompt us to a suitable and regular Behaviour of ourselves; we cannot be imagin'd either to please or displease him by any sort of Actions that we perform, let them be what they will. Because, by this *Hypothesis*, all the Inclinations and Dispositions which belong to us, as intelligent Creatures, are the meer Result of the *Management and Institution* we have had from our Fellow-Creatures about us. What they please to put into us, we take, and we act accordingly. If they set us right, and we do ever so well, there is no Obedience to God in the Case; for we do but as we were taught, and because we were taught to do so by them. If, on the other hand, we act ever so wrong, we break no Laws of God, we go contrary to no Manifestations of the Will of our Creator; and therefore, we can no more justly incur his Displeasure by this Means, having no Orders nor Injunctions from him to observe; than we can please and honour him by that mechanical Regularity of Action, which we derive merely from the Authority or the Impulses of other Men: For if no Law, then no Transgression on the one Hand, as well as no Obedience on the other. We are not capable either of Virtue or Vice; and therefore neither of receiving any moral Good or Evil at the Hands of our Creator. We ought never to suppose that God either rewards or punishes,

niſhes in the preſent Life: That the moſt ſignal Bleſſings beſtowed on us are Favours; or the moſt direful Calamities, Expreſſions of his Wrath and Indignation. We ſhould conclude, that he is neither pleaſed or diſpleaſed, when any of theſe things happen to the World; but that as we are perfectly indifferent to him, ſo is he to us; never concerning himſelf about any of our Actions or Affairs, nor caring how things go on, whether well or ill, here below.

And thus God Almighty is fairly excluded from all Intereſt in the Government of the rational, and therefore the moſt excellent, Part of the Creation; or, at leaſt, made to adminiſter it with reſpect to Men, juſt as to the viler Animals, or even inſenſible Bodies themſelves. Theſe are all of them ſubject to his general Dominion and Providence, and ſo are we, and that is all. Such a Scheme would be much more tolerable in a profeſſed * *Epicurean*, than in Men; who may pretend, by the Advantage of wonderful modern Diſcoveries, to demonſtrate the Being and Perfections of a God, after another ſort of manner, than any of the antient *Philoſophers* ever could do.

I ſhall only ſay this, That if the *Deiſts* can fancy a Divinity to themſelves, capable of acting after this imprudent, fantaſtical Manner, they are at Liberty to do what they pleaſe; but I declare for my own Part, that I ſhould never think Him worthy of my Service and Adoration: Nor are they the Men they would paſs for

* Omnis enim per ſe Divûm Natura neceſſe 'ſt
Immortali Ævo ſummâ cum Pace fruatur,
Semota ab noſtris rebus, ſejunctaque longè,
Nam privata Dolore omni, privata Periclis
Ipſa ſuis pollens Opibus, nihil indiga noſtri,
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ.

Lucret. Lib. 1.

Quod beatum eſt, & immortale, id nec habet negotium, nec exhibet cuiquam. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. Lib.* 1.

in the World, if they have ſuch deſpicable Notions of God as theſe are; ſince it is ſtrictly demonſtrable, from the neceſſary Attributes of his Nature, that he cannot be ſuch a one, as this horrid *Hypotheſis* repreſents him to be.

SECT. XI.

Fourthly, I Shall conclude this *Head*, with a Queſtion concerning the *Firſt Man*, which I muſt deſire theſe Gentlemen to reſolve; and, if I miſtake not, let them anſwer which Way they will, they will find ſome perplexed Conſequences attending the Solution they ſhall think fit to offer us. In propoſing this Queſtion, I take it for granted, *that they believe there was a Firſt Man*; *or that the World has not gone on at this Rate, in a Succeſſion of Fathers and Sons, from all Eternity*: For otherwiſe, they are not the Perſons I am, in this Diſcourſe, concerned withal. And beſides, this is not a Point of pure *Chriſtian Theology*; for if it were, I would not impoſe it upon them, without particular Proof. It is not only *Moſes*'s Doctrine, but that of the † *Poets* too; and this

† *Præterea, ſi nulla fuit Genitalis* Origo
Terraï & Cæli, ſempérque Æterna fuere, &c.
Lucret. Lib. 5.

——*Ut his Exordia* Primis
Omnia, & ipſe tener Mundi concreverit Orbis.
Virg. Eclog. 6.

Cum prorepſerunt Primis *Animalia Terris,*
Multum & turpe Pecus, &c. Horat. Lib. i. Sat. 3.
Ante Mare & Terras, & quod tegit omnia Cælum,
Unus erat Toto Naturæ Vultus in Orbe,
Quem dixere Chaos —— &c. Ovid. Metam. Lib. 1.
Ἦτοι μὲν πρώτιστα Χάος γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, &c. Heſiod. Theogon.
Εν μὲ Γαίαν ἔτευξε, ἐν δ' ὠκεανὸν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,
Ἠέλιον τ' ἀκάμαντα, σελήνην τε πλήθουσαν.
Homer, Iliad. 18.

——Μῆν

this Authority, I hope, is ſufficient to put it out of all doubt with them: Tho' I muſt add, *That all that the* Poets *ſay upon this Head, as well as ſeveral others that make a very beautiful Figure in their Compoſitions*, are plain Tranſcriptions from *Moſes*, the moſt antient Hiſtorian in the Univerſe. And this *Juſtin Martyr* has perſpicuouſly made out; and in the ſame Diſcourſe as plainly aſſerted and proved, to his Countrymen the *Greeks*, the * *Antiquity* of the *Moſaick* Writings, before thoſe of all their own *Hiſtorians*, *Poets*, *Philoſophers*, or *Legiſlators* whatſoever.

However, to paſs by theſe Things at preſent, I am concerned only in the Suppoſition of ſome *Firſt Man*; not caring in what Manner, or how long ago he was created, or what his Name was: Tho' *Juſtin* refers the *Greeks* to one of their own † *Oracles*, which called him by the Name of *Adam*, as *Moſes* had done long before.

Now the Queſtion I would propoſe here, is, *Whether this firſt Parent of Mankind was created with Diſpoſitions and Inclinations to exert his Faculties, as an intelligent Creature ought to do, upon proper Motives and Inducements; or whether he was not?* That is, in other Words, *Whether*

——Μοῦνον δ' ἐσόρα κόσμοιο ἄνακτα·
Εἷς ἔς, αὐτογενὴς ἑνὸς ἔκγονα πάντα τέτυκται,
Orph. apud Juſt. de Monar. *p.* 156.
Εἷς ταῖς αληθείαισιν εἷς ἐστιν Θεὸς,
Ὃς οὐρανὸν τέτευχε, καὶ Γαῖαν μακρὰν, &c. Sophoc. uti apud Juſtin. in Cohor. ad Græcos. *p.* 83. Et de Monarch. *p.* 154.

* —— Ἵνα γνῶτε ὅτι πάντων τῶν παρ' ὑμῖν, εἴτε σοφῶν, εἴτε ποιητῶν, εἴτε ἱστοριογράφων, ἢ φιλοσόφων, ἢ νομοθετῶν πολλῷ πρεσβύτατος γέγονεν, ὁ πρῶτος τῆς θεοσεβείας διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν Μωϋσῆς γεγονῶς, ὡς δηλοῦσιν ἡμῖν αἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἱστορίαι. Juſtin. Mart. Cohort. ad Græcos. *Pag.* 62. Edit. Oxon.

† Ὃν πρῶτον πλάσας μερόπων, Ἀδὰμ δὲ καλέσας. Juſtin. Ibid.

a certain determinate Law, was impreſſed on his reaſonable Nature, for this End or Purpoſe, by his Creator, or no?

If it be ſaid, that there was not: I muſt ask then, how did he come to obtain Principles and Diſpoſitions proper for a rational Nature to act and govern itſelf by? There are but theſe three Ways poſſible in the very Nature of the thing, *Either ordinary Teaching and Tradition; extraordinary Infuſion by God; or the Influence of external Objects:* I mean the various Works of God in the viſible Creation, preſenting themſelves to the Senſes, and giving occaſion to the Mind to exert itſelf, and by that Means to fix ſuch a Biaſs or Tendency to Action in Human Nature, as we call an original, impreſſed, or congenial Law.

SECT. XII.

NOW the firſt of theſe Methods *could not poſſibly take place here.*

The ſecond *impeaches the Divine Wiſdom and Prudence.*

And the third *amounts to a plain begging of the Queſtion.*

Firſt, It is plain, that the firſt of theſe Methods could never take place in this Caſe: For we are ſpeaking of the firſt Man; in which Caſe Parents and Nurſes, and all other Human Inſtructors, are totally excluded. And we cannot imagine that the venerable Head of our Race ſhould be ſent to the *Birds*, *Beaſts*, and *Fiſhes*, to know how to uſe his own Underſtanding, and learn the Deportment fit for a reaſonable Creature.

Secondly, To create a bare rational Nature firſt, and then to impart thoſe neceſſary Principles of Action afterwards, by *extraordinary Infuſion*; is going ſo far about to do what was ſimply neceſſary to be done, and might have been done by an infinitely wiſe and powerful Agent with as much Facility, at the very firſt Formation of a Creature: I ſay, it is taking ſuch a Compaſs, and is ſuch a

an indirect, unaccurate ſort of proceeding; that we cannot make our ſelves ſo guilty, as to aſcribe it to God, who cannot but know and chuſe the moſt perfect and lovely ways of working, in all that he does. And ſurely, to accompliſh noble Ends by the moſt compendious Methods of Operation, is in the very Nature of the thing, a principal Perfection. It is infinitely more conciſe and beautiful, and therefore more worthy of God, to ſet out a Creature, finiſhed and compleat at firſt; than to make a Maſs of being, to be turned and diſpoſed to proper Modes of Action, by ſome after Effects of divine Skill and Omnipotence.

SECT. XIII.

Thirdly, I Say, that to ſuppoſe, *Theſe Principles were acquired or contracted by Contemplation of the Works of God in the viſible Creation; is manifeſtly to take the grand Point in Diſpute for granted.* The reaſon is, becauſe it ſuppoſes that Law in Human Nature, which I ſpeak of, to be already fixed and ſettled. For what is Contemplation, that includes no kind of Argumentation or Reflection? And where Argument and Reflection are; muſt there not be a Law eſtabliſhed, by virtue of which a Creature who contemplates, and in that Contemplation argues and reflects, ſhould be inclined or prompted to argue and reflect in that manner, upon ſuch external motives and appearances? Of what uſe would ten thouſand Worlds of Objects be to an intelligent Creature, or a Being of a rational Nature, which yet were purely paſſive, and void of all Diſpoſitions to exert that Nature, after a proper and ſuitable manner? Tho' Objects can impreſs the outward Organs, they cannot work themſelves into the Subſtance of the Thinking Power, whatever it be, and create Efforts and Tendencies therein, to act after this or that manner, or to draw

theſe Concluſions rather than others; if ſuch Principles of Operation were not there before.

And this is true to a Demonſtration, whatever we make the Human Mind to be; whether an immaterial Subſtance, or elſe a mere Syſtem of Matter.

SECT. XIV.

FOR ſuppoſe the Mind, firſt of all, to be *a Subſtance quite diſtinct from Matter, or of another kind of Eſſence than thoſe Beings we call Bodies, are of.*

Then, I hope, it will be allowed, that the Action of External Matter, that is, *Objects*, upon the *Incorporeal Senſories*, cannot poſſibly produce in the *Incorporeal Mind* ſuch ſort of *Phænomena* as thoſe are, which we call by the name of *Inclinations and Diſpoſitions*, to *remember*, *think*, and *judge* after this or that particular manner. For how ſhould the Impulſes of Matter be received, where no Matter is; or what effect ſhould they produce, upon a Being ſo infinitely Heterogeneal to Matter?

Suppoſe, in the ſecond place, *the Mind to be a mere Syſtem of Matter; and thought to be nothing elſe but the Revolutions or Agitations of ſome finer Particles thereof. When the Organs of the Senſes are ſtruck by ſome Motions propagated from Objects abroad; we will ſuppoſe the Motions or Vibrations excited there, to be likewiſe continued to the Parts within.* So that whether by the means of the *Liquidum Nervorum*, contained in the Canals diſperſed up and down the Machine, or by any other corporeal Medium or Inſtrument whatſoever; the Impulſe at laſt reaches that Orb, Vortex, or Syſtem of Matter, in the Motions of which, Thought doth peculiarly conſiſt. Here then we have Thought produced. This Object, be it what it will, has ſet the Particles a moving, and this Motion, I will ſuppoſe, is my actual Cogitation or Knowledge of this Object.

But now Experience farther aſſures me, *that this Cogitation of ſuch an Object, is the occaſion of my making ſome Inferences*

rences or Concluſions therefrom; and all Concluſions are Propoſitions really diſtinct from the Premiſes which beget them.

Therefore, the firſt Motions of actual Thought muſt generate other Motions really diſtinct from themſelves. For what rate of Diſtinction there is between Premiſes and Concluſions, the ſame muſt of neceſſity be between the ſpecies of Motion which from Premiſes, and thoſe which generate Concluſions. But the Parts of Matter, moving according to any poſſible determination, *cannot change their Directions, but by the Impulſe of ſome External Force.* And therefore it is neceſſary, that we have ſome foreign Impulſe to change their Direction in this Caſe, that ſo we may have a diſtinct ſort of Motion generated, that may produce a Concluſion.

Now this external Mover in the preſent Caſe, is either the firſt Object which ſtruck the Senſes, or ſome other different from it.

If it be the firſt, then it will produce the very ſame Agitations as before, and conſequently there will be no different Motion generated to form a *Concluſion.* If it be another object; how ſhould that ever produce a Motion, which ſhould be the occaſion of my making ſome Inference concerning the firſt Object, which is totally different from it? How ſhould the Vibrations excited by an Horſe lead me naturally to think of a Fleet of Ships; or ſome creeping Plant to run into a Concluſion about the Properties of the fixed Stars?

So that then upon this *Hypotheſis*, it were impoſſible ever to draw any Concluſions from External Appearances, or to infer one thing from another. And yet Experience ſhews me, that I am able to do this. As for Example:

I think a double Inference follows from this preſent diſcourſe, about the Operations of the Human Mind, *viz. That we are not compoſed of mere Matter and Motion; and that if we were, there yet would be ſomething more than the bare Preſence and Action of external Objects required to affect a proper Biaſs or Tendency in our Faculties, to exert themſelves*

conformably thereto. For by what has been ſaid, it is demonſtrable that it can never be done by mere Matter and Motion, or blind mechanical Impulſe.

So that now I ſay, to argue at this rate, is plainly to beg the Queſtion, and to take the great Thing in Diſpute for granted.

From hence it follows, *That in the Caſe of the firſt Man, an original impreſſed Law muſt neceſſarily be allowed.*

Now, I ſay, if it were neceſſary and fit he ſhould be made ſo, why ſhould not the ſame Reaſons hold with reſpect to us? We have all the need of ſuch an Inſtitution that he could poſſibly have, and more; as being otherwiſe entirely at the Mercy of our Fellow-Creatures, who are moſt of them but poorly qualified to impart Principles of Underſtanding, and give Laws for rational Beings to govern themſelves by. It is, beyond all things abſurd and precarious, to ſuppoſe that the *Firſt Man* alone ſhould be thus happily qualified by his Maker; and all the reſt of his offspring created under ſuch very deſpicable and miſerable Circumſtances.

And from theſe Conſiderations, I hope, the Truth of the *firſt Propoſition* may be fully evinced to all, who have any ſuch Notions of God, as will not ſuffer them to charge him with thoſe imprudent and indecent ways of proceeding, which we ſhould be aſhamed to be charged with ourſelves.

SECT. XV.

THE ſecond Thing propoſed was to ſhew, *That tho' a certain Law be eſtabliſhed by God in our reaſonable Natures, it is in our Power notwithſtanding to act contrary to the Tenour thereof, or to exert our Minds after quite another Manner than that Law obliges us to.*

And this we ſhall preſently find to be true, by reflecting but a little upon our own Conſtitution. Tho' God

God has made us intelligent rational Beings, he has not made it eſſential to us to act rationally, and as we ought to do. He has not created us under a mechanical Neceſſity of conforming ourſelves perpetually to that wiſe Order which is preſcribed to us in the Frame of our reaſonable Nature; nor are we compelled thereto by any predetermining Force or Influence from him, as the Supreme Author and Agent of the Univerſe. To take this right, we muſt conſider, that beſides *Underſtanding*, or a Power of Knowing, Arguing, and Reflecting upon Things, God has endowed us with another, which is of a very different Nature; and ſo adapted, as to be either extremely beneficial or harmful to us, according to the Uſe we make of it. *This is Liberty, or free Will*, the Root of moral Good and Evil, the Foundation of all Rewards and Puniſhments, the diſtinguiſhing Perfection of Man from the Creatures below him, and the genuine Cauſe of an infinite Variety of Appearances in the rational World. By the Means of this Power we can diſpoſe ourſelves to act, either in or out of that Order and Decorum which our wiſe and good Maker has appointed us to obſerve. We can conſider what Law he has enjoined us to go by as reaſonable Creatures; and we can excite ourſelves to a juſt and ready Compliance with it: And on the other Hand, we can *forbear* all that Thought and Conſideration; or if we do think we can do it *careleſsly* and negligently; either never come to rational Concluſions and Determinations at all, or, if we pleaſe, when we have made them, not put them in Practice. The eſtabliſhed Order of Nature is, *That the Will ſhould always act in a juſt and regular Subordination to the Dictates of the Underſtanding:* That the Mind, as a ſure Guide, ſhould go before, determining what is fit to be done and purſued, or omitted and avoided; and by that Means direct and lead on the Operations of this Faculty, which ought to chuſe or refuſe accordingly. And the Underſtanding being ſuppoſed to be rightly informed, we always

ways act rationally and well, when things go on in this Courſe; the Mind duly preſcribing, and the Will ſweetly yielding to its Preſcriptions, each Power keeping its proper Place and Office. But whether the Mind be duly informed or no, the ſame Law of Nature muſt always take place. Some ſort of Concluſions muſt be made, whether they be juſt or unjuſt ones, whether plain and expreſs, or only tacit and by Conſequence, before the Will formally conſents, and gives Orders to the executive Powers to exert themſelves. Otherwiſe the Will of Man were not a noble rational Appetite, but a blind irrational one. For therefore we call it *Appetitus Rationalis*, becauſe it is made to act *ſub ductu Rationis*.

However, the Reſolutions of the Underſtanding, even the moſt ſound and poſitive ones, impoſe no manner of Neceſſity on the Will. For even the *laſt Dictate* itſelf is but one of the Prerequiſites to Action, and leaves the Will an intire and perfect Dominion over its own Act; which it may therefore either proceed to exert, or may ſuſpend and forbear, by its own native Liberty. Nay, except only in theſe two Caſes, *viz.* When the Object under Conſideration is either Univerſal Good, or the Supreme and Chiefeſt Good; *Bonum in Communi*, or *Summum Bonum:* The former of which is the *Adequate*, and the latter the *Principal* Object of the Will: I ſay, in all other Caſes but theſe, where the Thing propoſed is any particular or ſubordinate Good, not neceſſarily connected with that which is the Supreme; our Liberty extends here, not only to acting or not acting, but alſo the exerting of ſpecifically different or contrary Acts: We can chuſe or refuſe, chuſe this or the contrary, as well as chuſe or ſuſpend the Act of Choice. And this is what the Schoolmen, in their Way of Talking, mean by their Diſtinction of Liberty, into *Libertas Contrarietatis, ſive Specificationis, & Contradictionis, vel Exercitii.* The Terms, perhaps, may ſeem obſcure, as moſt of theirs do, but they are juſt; and we all know, by conſulting ourſelves,

ourſelves, that there is ſomething in our Natures that has really laid a Foundation for the Uſe of them.

But to proceed: When the Underſtanding, well inſtructed and informed of the ſeveral Circumſtances of a Caſe, has drawn ſuch Concluſions from them as are convenient and proper for us to manage ourſelves by, it has then done its Office; and what ought next to follow, is a ſuitable Compliance of the Will and Paſſions. But inſtead of this, the Decrees of the Mind are too often ſlighted; the Will anſwers by Averſion and Reluctancy, and prompts the inferior Powers to finiſh a Rebellion, begun by its own Obſtinacy. The Underſtanding is made to ſhift and alter its Reſolutions, to paſs from one Sentence and Opinion to another, till it has fixed on ſome one that will be grateful and pleaſing. So that altho' it be the eſtabliſhed Law in Human Nature, that the Dictates of this Faculty ſhould ſtill precede the Motions of the Will; yet in ſuch Caſes the Underſtanding acts its Part, as a Guide under abſolute Command, who muſt lead that Way only which is pointed out to him by another.

SECT. XVI.

IF it be enquired, How it comes about that we act after ſo prepoſterous and diſorderly a Manner; that the Underſtanding, which ſhould govern, comes to be thus governed and impoſed upon?

I anſwer: By the ill Uſe of our *Liberty*; by the undue Encouragements we can give, if we pleaſe, to the brutal Powers, our Paſſions and Affections; which were deſigned to be the Servants and not the Maſters of our Reaſon. The Caſe lies here, *We can give ourſelves more Scope than we ought to do, in our Reliſh of ſenſible and corporeal Impreſſions.* We can be more pleaſed and affected with them than we ſhould be; and thereupon give a greater

greater Looſe to the Paſſions than is conſiſtent with the Rules of that Government which we ought to keep up in ourſelves. By this Means the Authority of the Mind is weakned, its Taſte vitiated and depraved; and it is diſpoſed to a tame and eaſy Compliance with whatever is agreeable to the Bent of the ignoble Powers. The Conſequence of all is, *That by ſuch Encroachments as theſe, the Paſſions grow upon us, and work themſelves more and more beyond due Bounds and Government.* They importune and ſollicit againſt the Reſolves of the debilitated Mind; and by thoſe unaccountable, tho' powerful Charms, come to make the Underſtanding of a Party with them, and bribe it to pronounce on their Side.

So that tho' the Underſtanding, upon due Deliberation in the Caſe propoſed, does at firſt make a juſt and right Concluſion, *Ex. Gr. This thing in the preſent Circumſtances ought to be done, and the other ſhould be forborn*; yet, by the ſecret Influences of theſe Powers, which will recoil againſt the wholſom Determinations of right Reaſon, and reverſe them too, if not carefully and vigorouſly defended, it comes to paſs that the former rational Sentence begins to loſe its Authority, comes to be more faintly and languidly made, and is at laſt entirely dropped; being exchanged for another more favourable on the ſide of the Paſſions.

SECT. XVII.

FROM what has been ſaid, we may gather ſome uſeful *Corollaries.*

Coroll. 1. *It is plain from hence, how Men may be ſaid to offend againſt Light and Knowledge.*

To hate Truth as Truth, that is, purely and formally under that Notion, is, to be ſure, impoſſible to any rational Nature: even the *diabolical* Nature is not to be excepted in this Caſe; at the Bottom of all whoſe Oppoſition

poſition to God and Goodneſs, eternal Falſhood and Deluſion lie. But to hate Truth, as it may be very contrary to a Man's particular Intereſts and Affections, is not only poſſible, but very eaſy and common. And when Men ſuffer ſuch Averſions as theſe to get ground in them, which they ought not to ſuffer, and which, by a better Uſe of their Liberty, they may prevent; when they render their Paſſions inſolent and unruly by faulty Indulgence, or ſlackening the Reins of Government; and ſo debauch their Judgments into a corrupt and partial way of pronouncing, contrary to all foregoing ſound Concluſions made concerning their Duty, when their Thoughts were ſerene and cool, and Reaſon maintained its Authority in their Souls: This, I ſay, is ſinning againſt Knowledge to ſome purpoſe. And the Guilt of it lies here, that it is ſo much in a Man's Power to take other Meaſures: He can think, he can look over and conſult the ſolemn Decrees of an enlightned practical Judgment regiſtred in his own Breaſt, from whence his Duty may be clearly known, whenever the Performance of it is diſputed. There is no queſtion, but the Aggravations which attend ſuch Practices, are, in ſome certain Caſes, exceedingly more heinous than in others; ſo far, that, according to the *Scripture Style*, Men may be ſaid to act *maliciouſly*, and in a peculiar Senſe to ſin *wilfully*, after they have received the Knowledge of the Truth. However, this is, in ſome degree, more or leſs, the true State of the Caſe, with reſpect to all Men who proceed in any vicious Courſe, contrary to the ſober Dictates of their own Minds, or to any written or revealed Law of God. They are all wilful Sinners againſt the Truth. And the Source of all the Miſchief is from hence, *That they will betray their Underſtandings to the Inſults and baſe Management of the inferior Powers.* Hence all the Contradiction of their Actions to their ſtated Principles, their continual baffling and confuting themſelves, ſaying one thing and doing quite another:

—*Video*

——*Video Meliora, Proboque,*
Deteriora ſequor.

Things become Good and Evil to them by Turns; and what they are forced to condemn at one time, they find Reaſons to approve and chuſe at another: That is, tho' there are no Reaſons in the Nature of the Thing, yet the managed Judgment muſt make Reaſons for the preſent Occaſion; and when its own *Deterius* is the *Melius* of the Paſſions, muſt alter its Vote, and pronounce *Melius* too.

Coroll. 2. *The Cauſe of all the wrong Steps we make in Practice, is immediately an erroneous Sentence of the Underſtanding; but originally and principally the ill Uſe of Liberty, or the Power of the Will.*

Coroll. 3. *From hence appears the Danger of not checking the Violence and Importunity of the ſenſitive Powers in the firſt Aſſaults tending to a Breach of Duty.*

SECT. XVIII.

COroll. 4. *The only Method to prevent or remedy theſe Evils is an Habit of ſerious Thought and Conſideration.*

Not barely to think, but to dwell upon thoſe Things that tend to impreſs the deepeſt Senſe of Duty and Danger upon the Mind. The Neglect of this is certainly the moſt fatal and pernicious Diſtemper of Mankind; that which creates all their Trouble and Uneaſineſs, brings on all their Danger, and ſometimes terminates in abſolute irretrievable Miſery in this World, whatever happens in the next.

Now the Performance of this great Duty, is the joint Buſineſs of the Underſtanding and the Will. To conſider, is a proper Act of the Underſtanding; but a Man cannot conſider, without being willing to do ſo. I do not

not ſpeak of occaſional and accidental Thought, but of ſolemn Meditations, ſuch as the preſent Affair requires. Here, to be ſure, the Will is deeply concerned. A Man muſt both purpoſe and deſign it, and be diſpoſed and inclined to it too. He muſt ſee juſt Reaſons for doing it, and then ſubmit to thoſe Reaſons; that is, chuſe and embrace the Work; after which he actually applies to the Performance of it. So that the Underſtanding, firſt rouzed by proper Motives, repreſents the Reaſonableneſs, and preſſes the Neceſſity of the Duty; but then it is by a good uſe of our Liberty, that we are determined to the doing of the Thing itſelf, and break thro' all the Difficulties that lie in our Way.

Now it is a plain Caſe, that we have a Power to do this: We can engage our Underſtandings in ſerious Contemplation, if we will; that is, we can determine and ſettle ourſelves to think, provided our Wills are diſpoſed and inclined that Way. And this appears from hence, *That if we begin to think of a Subject, we can ſtop, and put an End to that particular Contemplation when we pleaſe. And if we are purſuing one Thought, we can break off, and immediately divert to another very different from the former.* This we all know to be true, and it is an Experiment that we can try at any time: However, as common and as cheap as it is, it ſhews us the Command we have of our Minds, and to how good as well as how ill a Purpoſe we may manage them, if we think fit.

And therefore, I ſay, ſince, by exerting ourſelves as we ought to do, we may bring ourſelves to a Habit of ſerious Conſideration; how juſt and reaſonable a Thing is it that we ſhould ſet to it, when the Advantages of ſuch a Practice, as well as the Inconveniences we prevent by it, are ſo many and ſo great? For Conſideration impreſſes the Arguments to Duty, and makes them ſink deep into the Mind; and therefore by this means, we encreaſe the Force, and ſtrengthen the Authority of the governing Faculty; which, to be ſure, muſt be of vaſt Advan-

Advantage. Whereas, on the other Hand, the Neglect of this diſarms the Mind, renders it heedleſs and incautious, and ſo prepares the Way for all thoſe Miſchiefs that follow upon its Subjection to the baſer and inferior Powers.

SECT. XIX.

BY what has been ſaid upon this Second Head, it appears how capable we are of uſing our Minds otherways than we ought to do, as rational Beings. If we are not capable of Variety of Action, it could not be preſſed upon us as a Matter of Duty and Obligation, to act after this or that particular manner: But it is in our Power to manage ourſelves as we ſhould not do. For God has made us free, as well as intelligent Creatures. But I come now to the laſt Head propoſed, *viz.*

Thirdly, To ſhew, *That it is perfectly agreeable to that original Law or Order which God has eſtabliſhed in our reaſonable Natures, with reſpect to the Operations of our Minds, and to the very Deſign of ſuch a Faculty as Underſtanding is; that we ſhould receive thoſe things as true and real, for the Proof of which, ſuch an Evidence as that before deſcribed, is alledged.*

SECT. XX.

IN order to the making out of this Propoſition, let us firſt conſider, *What our own Knowledge and Experience of ourſelves aſſures us to be plain Matter of Fact in this Caſe.*

We know, that where Proofs of this Nature, and of theſe Conditions, are offered to evince the Truth of Things to us, we do actually receive thoſe Things as true, and reſt in them as ſuch: And that it is not only by

by Accident, or upon extraordinary Occaſions, that we do thus; but it is our ſtated Practice, and the Practice of Mankind univerſally. We are conſcious to ourſelves, of ſuch an Aptitude or Diſpoſition to act after this manner, that we make ourſelves calm and eaſy, by yielding and giving way to it. It produces ſuch a pleaſing ſort of Tranquillity in our Minds, as ought to ariſe, and does ariſe from all ſuch Acts, wherein we conform ourſelves duly to the Impulſes of pure unadulterated Nature. On the other hand, we feel that ſuch Evidence of Truth is not to be withſtood without Pain and Remorſe. There are ſome Principles within us which will recoil upon us, when we ſet ourſelves to baffle it: It is ſwimming againſt the Stream, labouring againſt Biaſs and Conſtitution, the Reluctancies of which ſhew the very Attempt to be faulty and injurious.

Farther, we know very well, *that we are not taught nor trained up to this way of uſing and exerting of our Minds.* It is true, that we are taught particular Methods of ſearching out and proving Truth: But we have never any need of being informed in the general, that when Things are clear, as made out by that ſort of Proof which agrees to their Nature, we ſhould aſſent to the Truth of them; or that we ſhould not doubt, when, after accurate Searches, we find nothing to be a juſt Cauſe of doubting, in the Nature of Things, abſtracting from all our own Notions and Hypotheſes. No Parent nor Tutor ever infuſed theſe Principles; tho' they may, and ought to inculcate and improve them. The earlieſt Diſplays of human Nature evidently ſhew that they are lodged within, before any of our Inſtructors begin the kind Office of our Education.

And for the Proof of all this, I appeal to Human Nature and common Experience; of which every Man is a Judge: So that the Caſe is as eaſy to be thorowly ſifted and examined, as they any poſſibly be. It would be a

Crime to be ſolicitous about anſwering ſuch Perſons as ſhould bluntly deny what I have here ſaid to be Matter of Fact. I would beſtow the ſame Pains upon their Conviction, that I would in a rational Confutation of that Man, who ſhould tell me in good Earneſt, that *Ice and Fire* are the ſame ſort of Bodies; or, that it is *dark Night* in that very place, where my own Eyes, and thoſe of all other Men upon the Spot, ſee the Sun in his *Meridian Luſtre.*

The reſult of the Argument therefore is this: Since, by what has been ſaid here, it appears that there is a Diſpoſition in Human Nature to act after this manner, ſuch as does not, nor cannot proceed from Inſtruction and Education, but is moſt certainly *inbred* and *congenial* with it: Alſo ſince, by what was ſhewn before, it muſt of Neceſſity be granted, that there is ſome certain Law or Order eſtabliſhed in the reaſonable Nature of Man, which ſhould diſpoſe him to uſe and exert his Mind after a Manner becoming an intelligent Creature, upon proper Motives and Inducements: It follows, *That to act after this manner; that is, to yield the Aſſent of our Underſtandings to ſuch Evidence of Truth, is plainly to act in Conformity to the Tenor of that Law.*

SECT. XXI.

Secondly, IT *muſt needs be our wiſe Creator's Purpoſe and Intent, in endowing us with ſuch a Power as Underſtanding, that we ſhould aſſent to thoſe Things as true, which are recommended to our Belief by an Evidence of this Nature.* And that we may be the more thorowly apprized of the Truth of this, let us trace this Matter from the very Original.

It is plain, *That we have a Power, by which we are enabled to believe or aſſent to ſome Propoſitions as true.*

And as it is certain, that the infinitely wiſe Author of our Beings would not give this or any other Principle or Power

Power *for nothing*; that is, not intending it ſhould ever be exerted or brought to act: So it is as certain, he could never deſign that it ſhould be brought into act *by nothing*; or that it ſhould exert itſelf arbitrarily or fortuitouſly, or out of pure Spontaneity, without the Influence of ſome preceding Motives to rouze and excite it thereto. For otherwiſe, a rational Creature would be a mere whimſical unaccountable ſort of *Automaton*. That which we call the beſt Workmanſhip of God Almighty, in the viſible Creation, would be framed with infinitely leſs Prudence and Skill, than the meaneſt Pieces of Art here amongſt ourſelves, which are made to obſerve elegant Order, and to act from fixed Laws and Principles.

Since then it is neceſſary that ſome ſort of Motives or Reaſons ſhould always lead on the Operations of this Power of believing, or aſſenting to Things as true; the next Queſtion is, *Of what Kind and Nature they ought to be?* What ought to be the exciting Principle to ſuch a ſort of Action, as that which we call Belief? It cannot be Obſcurity and Confuſion in the Things or Propoſitions we conſider, or Doubt and Uncertainty in our own Minds. It could never be deſigned, that theſe ſhould be the Foundations of our Belief and Aſſent: For this caſts ſtill a more heinous Reflection upon the infinite Perfections of God, to imagine him to have made Man ſo aukward and perverſe a Creature; a thing of ſo crooked and contrary Diſpoſition, that Obſcurity ſhould excite his Faculties, and Uncertainty itſelf ſhould determine him to Action.

And therefore, it muſt needs be his Purpoſe and Intent, ſince we cannot doubt but he has framed our Natures with the moſt exact Wiſdom and Counſel, *that we ſhould exert this Power upon ſuch Motives or Conſiderations, as ſhould ſet Matters in a fair and clear Light before us, and be ſufficient to prevent all rational Doubt and Uncertainty about them.* Not only that confuſed precarious Evidence

ſhould not procure the Aſſent of our Minds; but alſo that all Evidence of a contrary Nature ſhould do it. For ſince the plain Uſe of that Faculty we call Underſtanding is to ſubſcribe and aſſent to Truth; it would be as monſtrous and irregular to ſuppoſe the Author of Nature had ſo framed it, that bright and unexceptionable Repreſentations of Truth ſhould not excite it to yield that Aſſent, as it would be to imagine that he had made Darkneſs natural to it, and fitted it to be wrought on, only by the Motives of Intricacy and Confuſion. But now we are under an abſolute Neceſſity of receiving many Things as true and real. Where we can neither have the Teſtimony of *Senſe* nor accurate *Demonſtration* to aſſure us of the Truth of thoſe Things. We muſt believe them, and yet cannot have the Proof of them by either of theſe Ways. And therefore it follows *That an Evidence of ſuch a Nature, as was before deſcribed, does lay a direct and poſitive Obligation upon us, to yield our Aſſent in all thoſe Caſes, wherein we cannot have ſenſible or demonſtrative Proof.*

SECT. XXII.

WE have hitherto proſecuted the firſt Argument, drawn from the Conſtitution of Human Nature, to prove the obligatory Nature of the Evidence before deſcribed; which Argument has this Advantage, *That there is plain and obvious Matter of Fact in ourſelves to ſupport it.*

And I hope that which follows will not be without ſome peculiar Advantages likewiſe.

Secondly, *The diſowning an Evidence of this Nature has a direct Tendency to take away all moral Certainty, and leaves no room for our Belief of any thing, but what is either an Object of Senſe, or Matter of pure Demonſtration.*

And therefore we are bound not to reject it, but to aſſent to thoſe Things as true, for the Proof of which ſuch Evidence is propounded to us.

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To ſet this Argument in a clear Light, two Things are to be done.

Firſt, To ſhew, *That the rejecting of an Evidence of this Nature has a direct Tendency to take away all moral Certainty; or to render moral Evidence from whence that Certainty ariſes, wholly uſeleſs and inſignificant in the World.*

Secondly, To ſhew, *That moral Evidence is not to be taken away; nor Things to be brought to that paſs, that ſenſible or demonſtrative Proof ſhould be required or given for every thing that is to be relied on as Truth amongſt Men.* It neither can be ſo, nor ought to be ſo: It is neither poſſible or convenient, according to the Conſtitution and State of the World we live in.

From both theſe together, the Reaſon of the Conſequence will appear, *viz. That therefore an Evidence of this Nature makes it ſtrictly juſt and rational for us to yield the Aſſent of our Minds.*

SECT. XXIII.

THE firſt of theſe *Propoſitions* is eaſily made out: *For there is no more neceſſary, in order to the higheſt Degree of moral Certainty that we can attain to, than an Evidence of ſuch Qualifications and Conditions, as I have already explained.* Let any one conſider the Deſcription given of it, and ſee whether there can be any thing farther required, to give us a compleat Satisfaction of the Truth of any thing, in a caſe where Demonſtration is wanting, or our own Eyes are not to be uſed to convince us thereof. And after a ſober Examination of the Matter, I make no queſtion but he will find, that ſuch a Proof is ſufficient to give us all the Aſſurance that we can rationally deſire, or really need to have, or that the very Nature of ſuch Caſes will allow of. Therefore I infer, *All ſorts of Evidence requiſite to produce moral Cer-*

tainty, will be ſure to fall within the Limits determined in that Deſcription.

And therefore, if the Evidence we have deſcribed may be rejected in any one Caſe propoſed; by a Parity of Reaſon, all other Proofs of the ſame kind may, and muſt be rejected too, if we act conſiſtently with ourſelves. For when Things are alike, and in their own Natures do not allow any difference to be made; if we make a difference, it muſt be reſolved intirely into Humour and Self-Will. Therefore upon this *Hypotheſis, All moral Evidence and Certainty are at once thrown out of the World, and we muſt never believe nor depend upon any thing as true, but what is fairly demonſtrated to us, or atteſted by our Senſes.* Now if the groſs Abſurdity and Falſhood, if the wretched and intolerable Conſequences of ſuch a Suppoſition be well demonſtrated; it will be certain beyond Diſpute, *that we are firmly obliged to acquieſce in an Evidence of the forementioned Characters.*

SECT. XXIV.

I Come therefore now to ſhew,

Secondly, *That moral Evidence is not to be taken away; or that Proofs of this Nature are of the utmoſt Conſequence and Importance to the World, and carry ſomething along with them, which is highly ſatisfactory and convincing to the Underſtanding of Mankind.*

And in order to the clearing of this, I ſhall do theſe two Things diſtinctly.

Firſt, Enquire into the Nature of moral Evidence; ſee what, and whence the Obligation of it ſprings; how far it may be compared with mathematical Evidence, and does agree therewith, in producing the very ſame Effects on our Minds.

Secondly, Conſider the Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of theſe ſorts of Proofs in the World, and the horrible Conſequences

ſequences that would follow upon the Suppoſition, *That Men were not to be governed by them.*

Firſt, I ſhall compriſe the Subſtance of what I have to ſay upon the former of theſe Heads, *viz. Concerning the Nature of Moral Evidence and Certainty*, in the following *Propoſitions.*

PROP. I.

THERE are certain ſtated Laws and Rules of Action, which Men, conſidered not only as rational Agents, but as Members of Society, as ſtanding in various Sorts of Relations, and tied by many Bonds one to another, have univerſally a ſtrict and neceſſary Regard to.

Affection, Inclination, Temper, Endownments, Intereſt, external Circumſtances, and Condition in the World, are general Motives, which fail not to influence Mankind to act, in their ſeveral Places, after this or that Manner, upon proper Occaſions, as they have Power and Opportunity.

That theſe Things are ſo in Fact, we are aſſured by all our Knowledge and Experience of the World. It is as plain, that Men are acted and influenced by theſe Principles in all their Converſation and Affairs, as that they exiſt, or move, or do any thing here.

Why ſuch Principles as theſe, which I have mentioned ſhould be eſtabliſhed, as the grand Springs of Motion in the Rational World; why Men ſhould be prompted to act and move by theſe, and not by others of another Nature: This is to be reſolved intirely into the wiſe and ſovereign diſpoſals of our great Creator. He knew perfectly well how to adapt the World and Human Nature to each other, after the beſt and fitteſt manner. He

knew how to eſtabliſh Laws for Men to proceed by, that their acting in ſuch or ſuch a ſort, ſhould be the moſt beautiful for Creatures of their Frame and Make, in ſuch a State, and under ſuch Circumſtances, as he deſigned to place them here.

Whatſoever we are ſure is true in Fact, with reſpect to the general Laws and Conſtitution of the World, we may be certain was moſt wiſely conſulted and determined. And conſequently, that theſe Laws and Principles we ſpeak of, which do obtain in Fact, are the fitteſt and moſt ſuitable to the Nature and Circumſtances of Mankind in the preſent State.

But I muſt add; *It was neceſſary, that ſome certain Laws, and Principles of Action or other, ſhould be eſtabliſhed in the rational World, as well as in that of Matter.*

And that, when theſe were once exactly adjuſted by infinite Wiſdom and Prudence to Human Nature, in all its Relations and Capacities in the preſent Life; it was requiſite they ſhould always be maintained, and ſhould ſtatedly influence Men throughout their whole Practice, when they act as reaſonable and ſociable Creatures.

For a World of intelligent Creatures, acting from no ſtated Laws and Principles, would have been as poor an Argument of Wiſdom and Counſel, as a rough ill-ſhapen Lump of Matter, or a vaſt Syſtem of Bodies tumbling about each other in the utmoſt Hurry and Confuſion, inſtead of a beautiful and well-ordered Fabrick.

Nor is the Honour of the wiſe, great, and good Governour of the Univerſe, a jot leſs concerned *in preſerving and keeping up* a general Order and Decorum amongſt reaſonable Beings; than in preſerving Method and Regularity in the Works of Nature, or in appointing them at firſt. And therefore, what Motives and Principles of Action, he in his infinite Wiſdom thought fitteſt for Men to proceed by, ought to be ſtanding and laſting: So that they ſhould not be moved uncertainly and precariouſly, ſometimes

times by one ſet of Principles, and at other times by thoſe directly contrary, or which have no manner of Affinity or Relation to them; but always from the ſame general Grounds and Reaſons, and for the ſame general Ends and Purpoſes; whatever different Appearances the Actions of different Men may ſeem to make in the World. This is like the Diſpoſal and Contrivance of an infinitely knowing and prudent Being. Whereas, the other way of proceeding, would repreſent him as a Being void of Counſel and Penetration, and make as if he had ſet the World together as well as he could; tho not well enough, to demonſtrate the high and glorious Perfections of his own Nature.

PROP. II.

BY virtue of theſe Laws ſo conſtantly and univerſally obtaining in the reaſonable World, it follows, that ſuch and ſuch things will of Courſe be brought to paſs; and on the contrary, that others as certainly will not.

We deduce the certainty of *Phyſical* Events and Appearances from thoſe fix'd and eſtabliſh'd Laws of the Natural World, by the means of which they are to be brought about, and which muſt be ſuſpended or violated, if they are not brought about. And tho the Author of Nature, who has eſtabliſh'd theſe Laws, can with infinite Eaſe, whenever he pleaſes, put a ſtop to them, and turn things out of their ordinary Courſe; and moreover, tho' we cannot demonſtrate, or by any other ſound Proof aſſure ourſelves, that theſe Appearances ſhall proceed and go on for the time to come, after the ſame manner as they have done for the time paſt: Yet ſince we know of no Reaſons to induce us to believe that things will be put out of their uſual order; we expect and depend upon 'em as certain. Accordingly, when we ſee the Sun ſet at Night,

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we aſſure ourſelves without Demonſtration, that he will riſe again the next Morning. We make no doubt, but Vapours will aſcend up into the Atmoſphere, that Rains and Dews will fall, that Vegetation will go on, that the ſeveral Seaſons of the Year will regularly ſucceed one another; tho he that firſt impreſſed, and therefore continually preſerves all theſe Motions, by which our World is maintain'd in this happy Order, can with a word ſpeaking, make all ceaſe again, and we are at no time *Mathematically* certain that he will not do ſo.

Now if we are rationally, tho not demonſtratively, ſure of theſe Events in Nature, upon the account of the eſtabliſhed Laws on which they depend; we may be rationally, tho' not demonſtratively ſure of ſuch or ſuch Events in the Moral or Rational World, upon the ſcore of the ſtated Laws, on which they depend, and by virtue of which they are to be brought to paſs.

Upon what Pretence can I think or imagine, that Men will neglect purſuing what they believe to be their true and real Intereſt, in ſuch Caſes where they muſt ſee and know, that their Intereſt is nearly concerned? Why ſhould I believe, that they will lay aſide all the common Paſſions and Inclinations of Human Nature, and take Meaſures quite contrary to thoſe, which Mankind always proceed by in the like Caſes? If I find matters to be ſo, that here are all the proper Inducements, that uſe to ſtir and engage Men to act after this or that manner, and never fail to produce the Effect; I muſt ſuppoſe after a very arbitrary and precarious manner, if I ſuppoſe them to forget, what is ſo much rooted in Human Nature, and is ſo conſonant to all the Laws and Modes of human Action; by going out of the common Road, and acting juſt the reverſe of what Men ordinarily do. Nor do Men ever do thus, while they keep in the right mind; unleſs they have ſome ſuperior predominant Reaſons for ſo doing. And in that caſe, to ſacrifice a leſs Intereſt, for what they really believe to be a greater, is

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ſtill acting by the ſame general Law, that always did, and ever will, govern Mankind. To go contrary to Temper, Inclination, and all the apparent Obligations of worldly Circumſtances, upon weighty and valuable Conſiderations of another Nature; is only changing a Man's Motives and Inducements, and proceeding upon the ſame common Principles as before.

But where I find no Appearance of any ſuch Reaſons as ſhould ſuſpend or alter the uſual Courſe of Mens Actions; I have as juſt ground to expect that the ſame Effects will come to paſs, which always do in the like Caſes, as to believe, that Night and Day, Summer and Winter, will come on in their wonted Order, when I ſee no ill Symptoms in Nature, that threaten the contrary.

Coroll. *Hence may be underſtood the Nature and true Origin of what we call Moral Certainty and Impoſſibility.*

When I find matters to be ſo, with reſpect to any caſe propoſed, that ſome groſs Abſurdities or Inconſiſtences, ſome plain and manifeſt Contradiction to theſe eſtabliſh'd Laws of the World, muſt neceſſarily be involved, if ſuch and ſuch Effects do or do not come to paſs amongſt Men: I am then *morally certain*, that they will not or will come to paſs; being aſſur'd that the ſtanding Laws of the World, do prohibit ſuch Repugnances or Contradictions, and therefore are a ſufficient Guard to ſecure me in my Belief, that things will work, according to the rational Concluſions I have drawn concerning them. And upon the ſame ſcore, we juſtly and properly uſe the Term *Impoſſibility* in theſe caſes; not meaning a ſimple abſolute Impoſſibility, no more than a ſimple abſolute Certainty: But *ex Hypotheſi*, upon ſuppoſition that Men are influenced in their Actions, by the ſame Principles and Motives which never fail to govern them, where plain and extraordinary Reaſons for their doing otherwiſe do not interpoſe. And this is the very ſame ſort of Impoſſibility in the rational World, with that which we call *Phyſical*, in the World of Nature. The one is as

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ſtrict and proper as the other, with reſpect to the Laws on which it depends. And therefore, for example, ſpeaking of ſome extraordinary great and publick Event, we make no ſcruple to ſay, *it is impoſſible that the Memory of it ſhould be totally loſt: Or that an Impoſture wherein a whole Nation, or many Nations are concerned, ſhould be carried on ſucceſsfully in the Face of Thouſands of the moſt inveterate Enemies, who have Policy, Sagacity, Power and Opportunity to do all things, that can be imagined neceſſary for the Diſcovery of it. Or that a Party or Society of Men, having all Advantages in their Hands, to eſtabliſh their own moſt valued Intereſt, and, without any danger or prejudice to themſelves, effectually to ruin that of their Adverſaries, which is fundamentally deſtructive of theirs; ſhould yet neglect to do this, and make way for the others to over-top and cruſh them.* Theſe things are impoſſible. Not that they involve any thing of pure *Phyſical* Contradictions; but *Political* Conſiderations, working on the Tempers and Paſſions of Men will make them act otherwiſe. Common Intereſt is Political Good. And Political or Civil Good, bears the ſame proportion to Society, that natural Good does to an Individual. Nor is it a jot leſs abſurd to imagine a Community or Body of Men, thus acting againſt, or not acting for, their darling Intereſt, when it is in their Power to do ſo; than to ſuppoſe a Man as an Animal, or a Rational Agent, ſhunning the Good and embracing the Evil, which relates to him in either of thoſe Capacities.

PROP. III.

IN ſome Caſes, where there is only Human Teſtimony alledged to evince the Truth of things; thoſe univerſal Laws of the World before mention'd, may be ſo far concerned, and from the very Nature of the Caſe, it may be neceſſary to have ſo great a regard to them; that we may have full ſecurity

ſecurity of the Truth and reality of thoſe things, as made out to us by Human Teſtimony alone, without any other Proof.

Teſtimony is undoubtedly a neceſſary Article in the Buſineſs of Moral Evidence; but we conclude wrong, when we make it to be the whole of that Evidence, or that which gives it its main Force and Strength. To ſtate the matter fairly; Teſtimony, in its regard to Moral Evidence, is as one Propoſition towards a Syllogiſm, which requires two, either expreſs or implied, in order to the making of a Concluſion.

I do not affirm this, of every trifling inconſiderable Caſe that happens in the World; but I do of Multitudes that frequently occur in Fact, and of others, whoſe Circumſtances may be ſimilar to theſe.

Now here, I ſay, that to compleat a Proof of this kind, and do the Argument that Juſtice, which, in the Nature of things, ought to be done it; beſides bare Authority or Teſtimony, we are to argue upon *Human Nature*, and the Laws which Mankind obſerve, in their ſeveral Relations and Obligations to each other.

So that theſe ſort of Proofs, to repreſent them as they ought to be, do indeed run after this manner: *Ex. Gr. If in this caſe propoſed, Circumſtances be realy thus and thus; then this or that Effect will certainly follow* ——

But Circumſtances are really ſo —— *Therefore*, &c.

In this Argument the Sequel of the major Propoſition is grounded upon the aforeſaid general Principles. For becauſe I know the Diſpoſitions and Tendencies of Human Nature, and what the ſtated Practice and Methods of Procedure amongſt Mankind are; therefore I know, that ſuch and ſuch Effects will follow regularly upon certain Suppoſitions made.

The minor Propoſition I take as Teſtimony; I am certify'd

certify'd by another Perſon, that Circumſtances are really ſo and ſo.

Now tho' the Truth of my Concluſion depends partly upon the Truth of this Propoſition, and I cannot aſſure myſelf of the one, unleſs I am perfectly ſatisfy'd of the other; yet the Caſe may be ſo, that I may have ſuch a degree of Security of the Truth of my minor Propoſition, as to be free from the leaſt imaginable doubt of the Truth of my Concluſion; and that upon ſuch Principles as are abſolutely unexceptionable.

For beſides the *Honour* and known *Veracity* of the Perſon teſtifying, ſuch Circumſtances as theſe may alſo concur. There may be an utter *Impoſſibility* of any manner of Advantage redounding to this Perſon, by impoſing a Falſhood on me: So that I can be ſure he could have no kind of Motive or Temptation to incline him to act ſo fraudulent and diſhoneſt a Part. Again, Matters may be ſo, that the Cheat muſt infallibly be diſcover'd by ſome other Methods quickly after, in Caſe he ſhould abuſe me by a falſe Repreſentation of things at preſent. I cannot perhaps be long without knowing the right of the matter whether this Perſon tells it me or no; and if he does not, he draws, it may be, a thouſand Cenſures and Reproaches upon himſelf, and makes himſelf odious and contemptible to all Mankind, that have any Knowledge of him. Now where the Caſe is ſuch, that theſe and, it may be, other weighty and convincing Circumſtances do plainly concur; tho' I ground one of the Propoſitions of my Syllogiſm upon Human Teſtimony, yet I am at no Uncertainty at all about the Truth of my Concluſion.

For I know, that all Men are influenced in their Actions by ſome Motives or other.

And I know, that they naturally abhor ſuch Effects as Hatred, Shame and Contempt from the reſt of their Fellow-Creatures. And therefore, when matters are brought to that paſs, that I muſt either contradict theſe plain Notions, and proceed upon ſuch as are the very Reverſe of them

them, or else receive a Testimony that is alledged, as what gives me a true and sincere account of things: I am then determined to admit the Testimony as true; and I forfeit all Pretensions to right Reason, and even to common Sense and Understanding, if I do not.

Coroll. It is plain therefore, *that we are obliged to consider something more in many Cases of Testimony, than the bare Word amd Report of him, who delivers that Testimony.* Because by the very Circumstances of the thing, we may be obliged to consider the *Authority* of the Speaker or Writer, in Conjunction with all those Reasons, founded upon the *general Laws* of the World; by which we may argue ourselves into a just Assurance of the Truth of what is thus reported to us.

PROP. IV.

STRICT and perfect Demonstration proceeds from such Premisses, and such only, ***as are true, first, immediate, more known, prior to, and Causes of the Conclusion.***

By this I mean, what we commonly call the *Demonstration* τῦ διὶ ὅτι or *Propter quid*; in which we always argue from a proper immediate Cause, either Intrinsecal to the Subject, as Matter, Form, or some predemonstrated Affection; or else extrinsecal to it, as an efficient or final Cause.

The Assent we yield to such sort of Proof, or the Knowledge of Conclusions inferred from Premisses thus qualify'd, is firm and certain in the highest Degree possible; and by way of Eminence and Distinction from all others, is called *Scientia. To know*, in this Sense is clearly to understand the cause for which a thing is; that it is the Cause of that thing, and that it cannot be otherwise

wiſe. So that in ſuch Caſes as theſe, the Certainty we arrive at, concerning the Truth of things, is not only Indubitable, but Infallible too; not ſimply and abſolutely Infallible, for the Divine Knowledge only is ſuch, but Conditionally, or upon Suppoſition, that our Faculties are not miſled or deceived.

As for the other ſort of Demonſtration, *viz.* The διὰ ὅτι or *Quod ſit*; here the *Terminus Medius*, inſtead of being an immediate neareſt Cauſe, is either a remote one, or ſome neceſſary Effect. And therefore it being impoſſible, that the Premiſſes in this kind of Demonſtration, ſhould come up to the Conditions of the former; it is ſomewhat leſs advantageous, and in the Order of things to be reckon'd of an inferior and more imperfect kind.

However, a Demonſtration of this nature, may give us all the Aſſurance of the Truth of things, that the διὰ ὅτι itſelf does or can do; and our Concluſions here, are in ſome ſenſe *Scientifical* as well as there. The difference is, that the former ſhews us the prime Cauſes and Reaſons of things, and that they *muſt neceſſarily* be ſo as we know them to be; but the latter only aſſures us, that they are ſo in Reality, either by ſome genuine Conſequences of them, or ſome Cauſes which lie at a farther Diſtance. But they are ſufficient to extort the Aſſent of the Mind, and leave us, as I ſaid, compleatly ſatisfy'd and convinced. Of this kind are moſtly thoſe Demonſtrations which are uſed in *Phyſical*, *Metaphyſical*, and ſome *Theological* Matters. Our Demonſtrations, for Example, of the Exiſtence of a God, being all of them διὰ ὅτι, and *à poſteriori*, as proceeding from the Effects. Oſtenſive Mathematical Demonſtrations, are all of them of the former ſort, *viz.* διὰ ὅτι, or *Propter quid*. For they proceed from predemonſtrated Affections which run up at laſt into plain ſelf-evident Principles or Propoſitions, which, for the Dignity and Importance of them, the *Mathematicians* call by the Name of *Axioms*.

But

But beſides the direct or *oſtenſive* Demonſtration, either διὶ ὅτι or ὅτι, in which the Concluſion is evidently and directly inferred from Premiſſes of all, or only ſome of the forementionʼd Conditions; there is another ſort, which we call *Demonſtratio ducens ad Abſurdum vel Impoſſibile:* Wherein we argue, *That the Concluſion inferred from ſuch or ſuch Premiſſes, muſt needs be true, becauſe the Contradictory to it, is apparently Falſe and Abſurd.* Now tho' this be the loweſt of all Demonſtrations, as not directly and immediately inferring the thing itſelf to be proved, and therefore is not to be choſen where an oſtenſive Demonſtration can be had; yet it is univerſally allowed to be ſound and good, and accordingly it paſſes current amongſt the *Mathematicians* themſelves, who frequently uſe it in making out the Truth of many of their Propoſitions, and that not only in the mixed or concrete Sciences, but alſo in the pure or abſtracted ones. And in the Nature of the thing itſelf, this *reductio ad abſurdum* is good and ſufficient Proof. For we are under eternal Obligations to avoid Contradictions and Abſurdities; and that not only in matters capable of Demonſtration, but thoſe of any other Nature alſo. But of this more by and by.

Coroll. It is plain therefore, *how Moral Proof differs from ſtrict and perfect Demonſtration.* It is impoſſible that the Premiſſes made uſe of in this ſort of Proof, ſhould come up to the Conditions which accurate Demonſtration requires. However,

PROP. V.

SOME Propoſitions admitting only of Moral Proof, may be as evident as others capable of perfect Demonſtration.

Evidence, I take to be the clear appearance of Truth to the Mind, producing a ready Aſſent to it as ſuch. So that Evidence may always be taken, as proportional to the *Quickneſs* of the Aſſent; an higher Degree of Evidence, producing a more ſudden and ſpeedy Effect on the Underſtanding, than a lower Degree does. This I believe will hardly be diſputed.

We know likewiſe, that the Propoſitions or Premiſſes in Mathematical Demonſtration, derive their Force from ſome others before demonſtrated, and theſe from others; and ſo at laſt we come up to Axioms, or firſt Principles, for which we have no Demonſtration at all: For if we had, then there muſt be other principles, prior to, and more known than them; and conſequently, they would not be firſt principles, which is contrary to the *Hypotheſis*. In like manner, theſe other principles are either demonſtrable, or not: If they are, then we run on at this rate, *ad Infinitum:* If they are not, then we muſt neceſſarily ſtop at ſome that are not capable of Demonſtration.

The like may be ſaid of Moral Propoſitions, and the principles they are ultimately reſolved into.

Now if ſome *moral* principles may be as evident as ſome of the plaineſt in *Mathematicks*, then the firſt or ſecond, *&c.* Step of genuine Conſequence, derived from the *moral* principles, will be as evident as the firſt or ſecond *&c.* Step of genuine Conſequence derived from the *mathematical*. For the juſt Conſequences of equally evident principles, at equal removes from thoſe principles themſelves, muſt needs be equally evident.

But ſome *moral* principles are as evident as ſome of the plaineſt in *Mathematicks*. Therefore the Propoſitions may be ſo too. For inſtance, *That Society could not be maintained in the World without a mutual Truſt of one Man in another*, is as evident as this Axiom in *Geometry*; *That if equal things be added too, or ſubſtracted from equals, the Sums or Remainders will be equal.* For let them both be

be propoſed to any Perſon, capable of underſtanding the Terms on both Sides; and he ſhall as ſpeedily aſſent to the former as the latter.

If we were to judge by *Numbers*, more Perſons would admit the former for a Truth without difficulty, than would the latter. Thoſe that have no notion of Sums and Remainders, would readily grant you, that the World muſt fall in Pieces, if Men could not truſt one another.

Ocular Demonſtration is full as plain on one ſide as the other. A Man may as well ſee, that people converſe and deal together in the World upon this principle; as he may ſee, that when ſix Inches are taken off on each ſide, from two Lines of twelve Inches a piece, there will be ſix Inches remaining in each Line.

Farther, tho' the one be an *abſolute abſtracted* Verity, a principle of eternal Truth; and the other of a *mixed and concrete* Nature, relating to the Frame and Conſtitution of the World; yet theſe Conſiderations are in their own Natures foreign to the matter of Evidence, and have no direct Tendency to render it either greater or leſs. Tho' by accident, Application to Matter and ſenſible things, may contribute to the encreaſe of Evidence, and remove ſome difficulties, which a total abſtraction from Matter may leave the Mind involved in. However, we know that many principles in *concrete Mathematicks* are fully as evident to us, as others in the pure abſtracted parts; and that is ſufficient to bear me out in aſſerting, *That unleſs ſome other particular Reaſon can be aſſigned, the Moral Principle is not therefore leſs evident than the Geometrical one*, before-mentioned, *becauſe the former is a mixed, and the latter a ſimple abſtracted Verity.*

The compariſon made in this Example may be made in like manner in various others. So that the preſent Propoſition, I hope, is ſufficiently clear.

Coroll. *Therefore it may be as abſurd to deny ſome Propoſitions which admit only Moral Proof, as to deny others capable of ſtrict Geometrical Demonſtration.*

For Abſurdity is heightened in proportion to the Evidence of the Propoſition denied. So that if two Propoſitions of an equal Evidence, tho' of a different Nature are propoſed; the Abſurdities of denying them will be equal. And ſince ſome *Moral* Propoſitions may be equally evident with ſome *Geometrical* ones, it will be as abſurd to deny the former as the latter. Becauſe, I ſay, it is the Evidence or Plainneſs of Propoſitions, and not the Subject Matter, which makes it abſurd to deny them.

Schol. It will not follow from this Propoſition, *That we may have the ſame infallible Certainty of the Truth of Moral Propoſitions, that we have of thoſe in* Mathematicks. Two Propoſitions may be equally evident, that is, *The Underſtanding may yield the ſame Degree of quick and eaſy Aſſent to the truth of them; and yet being inferred from Premiſſes of a very different Nature, the Certainty we have of them both may not be the ſame, but very much different.* In accurate Demonſtration, the Premiſſes are of ſuch a Nature, as to make us infallibly certain of the concluſion. In ſome Moral Proofs, the Premiſſes are of ſuch a Nature, as to render us indubitably certain of the Concluſion; that is, *we can acquieſce, without any rational doubt or ſcruple, in the Truth of it, tho' we do not infer it to our ſelves after that ſtrict and very exact way, in which we infer a* Mathematical *one.* So that equal Evidence, or the equally ready appearance of two Propoſitions of different kinds, and therefore inferred from principles of a different Nature, will never conclude the ſame *Modus* of Certainty in thoſe Propoſitions.

PROP. VI.

AS in Geometrical Reaſonings, Truths are many times inferred by the indirect Method

thod of Demonſtration, or Deduction to Impoſſibility; ſo the ſame ſort of Argumentation takes place in matters only capable of Moral Proof: where by fair Chains of Conſequence, groſs and palpable Abſurdities are the laſt Reſult of ſuch and ſuch Hypotheſes laid down.

I ſhall not need to ſubjoin any particular Proof of this Propoſition; the reaſon of which is ſo plain from what has been ſhewn already at PROP. I. and II.

All that I ſhall obſerve, is, *That there will be a Proof of it, I hope, ſufficiently convincing in the third Part of this Diſcourſe; where we ſhall have an occaſion to purſue in a pretty cloſe manner, ſome Enquiries relating to the Books which contain the* Chriſtian Revelation.

PROP. VII.

A Reduction to Abſurdity, in ſome Proofs of the Moral Kind, is much more to be avoided, than the falling into any Inconvenience conſequent upon the denial of Phyſical or Mathematical Propoſitions.

There is no doubt to be made, but a greater Inconvenience is more carefully to be avoided by us at any time, than a leſs. And we muſt needs allow that to be a greater Inconvenience, according to the real Nature of things, in which a Man is obliged to ſtand by Conſequences, which taken in their full Extent, involve the moſt Intricacy and Diſadvantage.

And thoſe Conſequences are certainly the moſt wretched and perplexed, which do not only affect the Perſon himſelf, who is forced to ſtand by them; but have alſo

a Tendency to publick Miſchief and Diſorder. He that obſtinately perſiſts in an Aſſertion which will at laſt end in this concluſion, *that he has no Senſe*, is not driven to ſuch Extremities, as he who gives his Adverſary ſcope to conclude, *that he has neither Senſe, nor Principles that render him fit for human Converſation.*

The character of a Fool, added to that of an Enemy to the Intereſts of Mankind, is intrinſecally worſe than an Imputation of bare Folly, or want of Underſtanding.

Now the caſe lies here. Tho' the denial of *Phyſical* or *Mathematical* Theorems, leads to ſome concluſions, the ſtanding by which, ſhews a man to be invincibly obſtinate or ſtupid; yet all the ill conſequences of this terminate in himſelf, and ſpread no farther: He gets an ill Name by it; but the publick is never the worſe for any particular Man's being, or making himſelf a Fool.

On the other hand, there is all this and more, conſequent upon the denial of ſome *Moral* Arguments. They may be reſolved into principles, as evidently true as any Axioms in *Geometry*. Therefore there is equal Folly and Impertinency in the denial of them. And then becauſe they relate to the Actions and Affairs of Mankind; the conſequences may be ſuch, as to deſtroy the Peace and Order of the whole World, if Men ſhould generally proceed after the ſame manner. So that there is no room for any rational Diſpute, on which ſide the worſt and moſt perplexed Abſurdities lie. However, if we were to abate this Article of equal Folly and Stupidity; yet the other of the Conſequences would ſtill vaſtly preponderate.

For I would fain know, which of theſe two, a Man ſhould moſt rationally ſcruple; *To be cramped and puzzled in a Point of pure Theory: or to be forced upon plain and open Contradictions to all the Laws of Society, and Human Nature itſelf?* Certainly Inconveniences of ſuch a kind as affect Life and common Practice, tho' they ſhould not be ſo extremely groſs and ridiculous as ſome

others may be, are yet in the Nature of the thing, and in the Judgment of all wiſe Men, far more to be avoided, than thoſe which relate to mere Speculation, and only reduce the Underſtanding to a Diſtreſs.

Coroll. 1. *If therefore a Propoſition in* Phyſicks *or* Mathematicks *be univerſally allowed to be fairly proved, when the contradictory Propoſition thereto plainly appears to be abſurd; then,* à fortiori, *when a* Moral *Propoſition is denied, and the Contradictory thereto appears plainly to involve Abſurdities of that worſe ſort; the Proof of that Propoſition ſhould be acknowledged to be juſt and legitimate.*

Coroll. 2. *And therefore thoſe Perſons act a moſt ridiculous part, who ſcruple running upon Inconveniences in a Point of Science; and will venture upon the groſſeſt Abſurdities that can be, by an irrational denial of Moral Proofs.*

For the better underſtanding the ſcope of the two following Propoſitions, I would premiſe, That there are two diſtinct things to be conſidered, with reſpect to the Iſſue or Reſult of Demonſtration.

One is, *The bare evincing, or making out the Truth of ſuch or ſuch a thing, which was propoſed to be cleared or made out thereby.* The other is, *The Satisfaction or Acquieſcency of the Mind in the Demonſtration offered to it:* By which means it comes to paſs, that the Mind not only ſubſcribes to the Truth of the Demonſtration, and allows it to be ſound and good; but does it alſo with a peculiar Pleaſure, and finds it ſelf wonderfully eaſy, and free from all Scruples in ſo doing.

This premiſed, I ſay in the next place,

PROP. VIII.

SOME Moral Proofs go as far, in evincing the Truth of things to us, as ſome ſort of Demonſtration can poſſibly do.

The Premiſſes in ſome Moral Proofs, may have ſuch Conditions as may be ſufficient to produce a full Conviction in our Minds, *that ſuch and ſuch things are actually Matter of Fact.*

But the *Demonſtration* ὅτι, or *quod ſit*, does only prove, *that things are really ſo or ſo.*

Therefore, as to the point of evincing Truth, ſome Moral Proofs may go as far as juſt Demonſtration.

Coroll. 1. Therefore we ought not to diſcredit Moral Evidence, upon any ſuch account as this, *viz. That it does not ſhew us from immediate Cauſes, why things muſt needs be ſo and ſo, and cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe.*

For if it be to be rejected upon this ſcore, then all our Demonſtrations *à poſteriori*, muſt be thrown out of Doors too.

Beſides, to diſown it for this Reaſon, is to quarrel with moral Evidence, becauſe it is not the ſame with rigorous Demonſtration *à priori*; which alone is able to give us ſuch an Aſſurance, as what the *Corollary* ſpeaks of.

Coroll. 2. *Moral Proofs go as far, in the way of convincing and ſatisfying our Minds, as is for the moſt part either Neceſſary, Uſeful, or Poſſible in the Nature of things.*

For there are vaſtly fewer Caſes in which we can demonſtrate *à priori*; than ſuch in which we can proceed the other way, and ſhew that things are really thus and thus in Fact. And then, it is likewiſe manifeſt, that in moſt Caſes, it is enough with reſpect to all the ends and purpoſes of our Knowledge, that we have undeniable proof, that things are actually and really true. This might eaſily be evinced beyond all contradiction, by enquiring into the true ends of the ſeveral kinds of Human Knowledge, and ſhewing, that ſuch an Aſſurance as I now ſpeak of, is in all reſpects ſufficient to anſwer thoſe Ends. And therefore, ſince Moral Proofs are ſufficient

to

to give us that Aſſurance, they are ſufficient to do all that is either Neceſſary, Uſeful, or, for the moſt part, Poſſible to be done.

PROP. IX.

THE Aſſent of our Minds to ſome Moral Concluſions, is attended with as little Heſitation and Doubt of the Truth of them; as that which we give to ſuch Concluſions, as are inferred à priori, *in the moſt ſtrict and rigorous way.*

There is plenty of Caſes ready at hand, to put this Propoſition out of all Diſpute.

Such, for example, are thoſe of innumerable *Places*, *Things*, *Perſons*, *Affairs*, and *Events*, which we never had, nor can poſſibly have, any direct perſonal Knowledge of; and yet we are as far from calling the Truth of any of them in queſtion, or being at all uneaſy upon that account, as we are from ſuſpecting the Truth of thoſe Concluſions, which the *Geometricians* do in their clear way of reaſoning demonſtrate to us. I do not ſay, we have the ſame ſort of Certainty in both Caſes; or that the Certainties on both ſides are produced by the ſame ſort of Principles, or after the ſame manner: But I aſſert, *That we have no more doubt in many Caſes on one ſide, than we have in any on the other.*

Men reſt as well ſatisfy'd, they expreſs as much aſſurance they are as little apprehenſive of any ill Conſequences which may poſſibly follow upon their being deluded in ſuch Inſtances as theſe: In ſhort, they ſhew by Words, by Practice and Conduct, by Temper and Reſentment, all the ſigns of a perfect Security, that they are right in their Truſt and Dependance; that any skilful *Mathemati-*

cian

cian can do, in his Repoſe upon the Truth of what *Euclid* and *Archimedes* have proved in their Writings.

And the reaſon is plain: For there are ſo many abſurd and contradictory things that muſt come to paſs, if a Man be deceiv'd in his Belief, in many of theſe common Caſes; there muſt have been ſuch Confederacies, Contrivances and Deſigns carried on amongſt ſome particular Men, in order to cheat all the reſt of Mankind, and ſecure the Deluſion everlaſtingly from Diſcovery; that one may ſafely ſay, ſuch things were impoſſible ever to have been brought about; or that they could not have come to paſs, unleſs the ſtated Courſe of things were altered, and the Laws by which the World is uſually governed, were intirely aboliſhed, to make way for others of a quite contrary nature.

Now this ſhocks a Man at the firſt hearing. The bare Imagination of ſuch an arbitrary and uncertain State of the World, *made and governed by an infinitely wiſe Being, and for infinitely wiſe and good Purpoſes*, is enough to confound any thoughtful Mind.

And therefore, I ſay, tho' we do not aſſure ourſelves in theſe Caſes, by the ſame *Media*, that we do in ſtrict Demonſtration; yet we have reaſon to depend upon the Truth of them, with as much compoſure and ſteddineſs of Mind as we ſhould do, if they were fairly demonſtrated to us: And accordingly it is Matter of Fact, that we do ſo in the common Affairs of Life.

PROP. X.

WHERE any ſort of Proof is adapted to the Nature of all Caſes, which are of one and the ſame kind in general; we ought to make uſe of, or apply the ſame kind of Proof, as well to thoſe particular Caſes which are of the higheſt and greateſt Importance; as to thoſe which are of a more trivial and vulgar Nature. It

It is the ſpecifick Difference in the nature of things which are the Objects of our Knowledge, that neceſſarily produces a proportional difference in our Methods of proving, or knowing the Truth of thoſe things. If they were all of one kind, we ſhould prove Truth in all ſorts of Caſes by one and the ſame way. But as the Properties of things differ, ſo of courſe muſt that Order which we obſerve, in aſcertaining ourſelves about the Truth of them, be various likewiſe. *Geometrical Truths* are evinced by direct Demonſtration, *à priori*; *Phyſical ones*, *à poſteriori*, or by Experiment; *Moral ones*, by Teſtimony, the Principles of human Nature, and the Laws of the World. To each † *Claſs* or Species of Truth, its own peculiar method of proof does belong. And all Truths of the ſame Claſs, are therefore to be evinced by the ſame ſort of Principles, or by the ſame general Method of Proceeding. We cannot have one Set of Principles, to prove Propoſitions of greater moment, and another to prove thoſe which are of leſs. For, at this rate, all Nature muſt be run into Confuſion, aud the juſt Order and Diſtinction of things be totally ſubverted and taken away. So that let a Propoſition be of what Dignity and Conſequence it will, yet if the Matter or Subject of it be reducible to the ſame Head or Claſs with the Matter or Subject of a Propoſition of a ſlighter and more trivial Nature, it is certain, that we are to proceed in the Proof of the former, after the ſame general manner, and by the ſame ſort of Principles, that we would proceed to prove the other by.

From hence therefore it follows,

† Δέγοιτο δ' ἂν ἱκανῶς εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὑποκειμένην ὅλην διασαφηθείη; τὸ γὰρ ἀκριβὲς οὐχ' ὁμοίως ἐν ἅπασι τοῖς λόγοις ἐπιζητητέον. Ariſtot. Ethic. ad Nicomach. Lib. 1. Cap. 1. Edit. Aurel. Allobrog. 1606.

Τὴν δ' ἀκριβολογίαν τὴν μαθηματικὴν οὐκ ἐν ἅπασιν ἀπαιτήτεον. Id. Metaphyſ. Lib. 2. Cap. 3.

Coroll

Coroll. 1. *Moral Evidence is not to be rejected, when it is alledged for the Proof of Matter of Fact, even of the greateſt Moment and Conſequence poſſible.*

For all Matter of Fact, of which we are not aſſured by the Teſtimony of Senſe, muſt needs be made out to us by Moral Proofs.

Therefore, ſince all Propoſitions of the ſame kind, are to be evinced by Principles of the ſame common Nature; it would be infinitely abſurd, to make the Value and Importance of the Subject-matter of any Propoſition, a reaſon for our diſowning that Moral Proof, which is produced to make out the Truth of it to us.

Coroll. 2. And therefore, *As we uſe our Reaſon in Worldly Affairs, ſo we muſt, in thoſe of our Salvation.* All the difference is, that we are to argue with more Care, in thoſe Caſes which depend upon moral Evidence, if our Salvation be concerned in them; than would be neceſſary for us to do, if the Queſtion were only about ſome Intereſt or Advantage in the preſent World. We muſt conſider the Evidences which are offered to us, with the cooleſt Thought, and the utmoſt Sagacity we can; reſolving to be neither irrationally Obſtinate, nor fondly Credulous and Eaſy; but with a juſt and fixed Reſolution of Mind, purſue the Enquiry after a fair and rational Proof, ſuch as Creatures endowed with Underſtanding and Diſcretion ought to expect in a Matter of great Concern.

And when we have found ſuch Proof as this, I ſay, that tho' even our eternal Felicity be concerned in the Enquiry, we ought to yield our Aſſent with as much Eaſe and Security, as we would do in the moſt familiar Buſineſſes of human Life. For the Reaſon of this, I refer to the foregoing Propoſition.

PROP.

PROP. XI.

IN ſpeaking of the Doubt or Suſpicion we have concerning the Truth of Teſtimony; we ought always to diſtinguiſh, between ſuch a Suſpicion as is founded on a bare Phyſical Poſſibility, *that a Witneſs may impoſe upon us in what he teſtifies; and a Suſpicion founded on ſome actual poſitive Cauſe, relating to the ill Character or Manners of that Witneſs, or ſome apparent Defect in the Teſtimony itſelf.*

Theſe are two very different kinds of Suſpicion, and care ought to be taken not to confound them one with another. If a Teſtimony wants any of thoſe Conditions, that Reaſon and univerſal Cuſtom have made requiſite to its Credibility; if it be obſcure; if it ſeems inconſiſtent with itſelf, if it be contradicted by other Teſtimonies of more Value and Authority; if it be delivered by a Perſon of a doubtful and ſuſpicious Reputation, or one who has forfeited all juſt Pretenſions to a ſhare in the Confidence of Mankind, by known Forgery, by ſcandalous Credulity and Partiality, or intolerable Negligence and Careleſſneſs in his Enquiries into Matters, and the Repreſentations he makes of them to other People: In theſe and ſuch like Caſes, Suſpicion of a Teſtimony is but juſt and reaſonable, and and all wiſe Men will, at leaſt, ſuſpend their Judgments, till the Matter can be decided by other Proofs, not liable to ſuch Exceptions.

But when none of all theſe things can be alledged, with any face of Reaſon or Truth, after the moſt exact Scrutiny that can be made into all the Circumſtances of a Caſe; then there remains nothing for a foundation of Suſpicion, but a pure *Phyſical* poſſibility of Deception: The

The Nature of which, as alſo what regard we ought to have thereunto, the following Propoſitions will ſhew us.

PROP. XII.

Concerning the Nature and various Reaſons or Foundations of a pure Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception.*

What I underſtand by this Notion of a *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception, amounts to no more than this, *viz. That in a ſtrict and abſtracted Senſe, or in the intrinſick Nature of things, it is not any way Abſurd, Impoſſible, or Contradictory, that a Man ſhould be impoſed on by another, in a matter of Teſtimony; even tho' there are no Reaſons to ſuſpect an actual Deception; nay, and ſtrong ones, on the other hand, to believe the contrary.*

Now there are various Conſiderations, upon which this *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception is founded: ſome of them, I muſt needs ſay, plainly ridiculous; yet however, ſuch as ought to be mention'd amongſt the reſt, that it may the better appear, in how narrow a compaſs this Notion, taken even in *Theory*, does lie, when a Man has pared off all that is ludicrous and fooliſh.

The Grounds of it, as I conceive, may be reduc'd to theſe Heads:

That it is not Phyſically impoſſible, *that he whom I take to be a Man of Virtue, by the fair and florid Character he appears with in the World, may ſecretly be vicious and inſincere; and notwithſtanding, for all that I know, form a Deſign to abuſe me.*

It is not impoſſible that he ſhould be miſ-inform'd and abuſed himſelf, and ſo cheat me, tho' without Deſign. *Falſum dicere*, and *mentiri*, are two different things; for tho' in both Caſes, a Man is abuſed with Falſhood inſtead of Truth; yet in the latter Caſe, he is abuſed with wicked Purpoſe and Contrivance.

Again,

Again, *It is not ſimply impoſſible, that a Man by mere Negligence, Heedleſſneſs, and Inattention to what he ſays himſelf, may accidentally give a wrong Account of things.* This is not ſo ſtrange as another Caſe is; which, notwithſtanding, is known to be Matter of Fact in the World, *viz. That ſome People, by a long Habit and Cuſtom of telling Untruths, grow to ſuch a degree of Inſenſibility, that they do not know when they ſpeak true, and when they do not.*

Laſtly, *It is not* Phyſically *impoſſible, that at the very Moment I am going to receive an Information, from a Perſon whoſe Judgment and Integrity I have not the leaſt doubt of; he may be ſtruck with ſome ſecret Diſtemper that may alter the whole Scheme of his Thoughts, and make him tell me a thing quite different from the Truth, and what he intended otherwiſe to do.* He may grow ſuddenly and inſenſibly Mad or Enthuſiaſtical; or ſome unlucky Turn may be given to his animal Spirits; or the whole Texture of his Brain may be alter'd in a Moment; or a thouſand other Accidents may happen, which I am no more aware of, than I am fearful of being impoſed upon, by means of the Effects of them. Nor do I believe there are any People, who live in Apprehenſions of being deceived by the Reports of other Men, upon the Account of any ſuch odd Changes as theſe are, which may poſſibly intervene.

However, as theſe and all the forementioned Caſes muſt be owned to be in themſelves *Phyſically* poſſible; ſo they are in that Senſe equally poſſible with reſpect to all Men, of what Characters ſoever. There is as much intrinſick Natural Poſſibility, that a Man of a very fair Reputation, ſhould deceive and act a fraudulent Part, or rave and grow whimſical; as that one of no Reputation, or of a very bad one, ſhould do ſo. For all Men, as Creatures, are equally defectible.

But then it is as certain, on the other hand, that there are ſome Conſiderations to be drawn from the different Characters of Men, in conjunction with other collateral Cir-

Circumſtances; which, tho' they cannot diminiſh the *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception itſelf, yet they vaſtly diminiſh our Apprehenſions of it, and make it juſt and neceſſary for us, to have either no regard to it at all, or that which is equivalent to none.

If the Perſon who teſtifies a thing be one whoſe character I have juſt Reaſons to ſuſpect, or know that it is very bad; then, beſides a *Phyſical Poſſibility*, there is in this caſe alſo a *Moral Probability* of my Deception: And if there ſhould be, over and above, any particular Reaſons inducing me to believe it may be the Intereſt of this Perſon to deceive me; then will this Probability be heighten'd in the proportion compounded of thoſe Reaſons, and the juſt Suſpicions I have concerning his Integrity.

But if, on the other hand, I have good Reaſons to conclude, he thinks it his Intereſt not to deceive me; then I have no more moral probability of Deception in the Caſe, than that which is in proportion to my juſt Doubts of his Sincerity, founded upon the ill Reputation of the Man.

If I am not apprized of any thing that, on the one hand, tends to the Prejudice of the Teſtifier's Character, nor, on the other hand, to the Advantage of it; but the caſe be ſo, that I am in a perfect *Equilibrium* or Indifferency, as to any Notions either of his Sincerity, or the contrary: Then, unleſs the Conſideration of other collateral Circumſtances intervene, I have no more than only a pure *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception.

But if any of thoſe Reaſons or Circumſtances are ſuperadded; then ſome Degrees of Moral Probability, either of my being deceived, or not being ſo, will be added to the aforeſaid *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception, to render the Caſe proportionably more or leſs doubtful.

But farther, it is far from being impoſſible in this Caſe, and I will ſay even in the former too, that the *Momentum* of the other Circumſtances may ſo far exceed that Circumſtance of my Ignorance of a good Character, or

or Knowledge of a bad one, with reſpect to a Perſon who teſtifies a Matter of Fact, that I may have a ſufficient Degree of *Moral Certainty*, that I am not impoſed on, notwithſtanding the *Phyſical Poſſibility* that I may be ſo.

If the Perſon who avouches a Thing for Truth be a Man of known Reputation for Prudence and Integrity; one who has not only never been attacked in his Character upon that Score, but has alſo had every one's good Word and Applauſe for all thoſe Vertues which recommend a Man as fit to be truſted and depended upon; then here is a high Degree of Moral Probability, that I am not deceived: As much more, than there is in the two laſt Caſes; as a Character of bright Vertue is ſuperior to no Character at all, or to a deſpicable and vicious one.

But if other ſtrengthning collateral Reaſons and Circumſtances are brought in over and above; I may have, in ſuch a Caſe, all the Degrees of *Moral Certainty* that can be attained to ſecure me that I am not deceived.

For tho', if all other Circumſtances were alike, it might ſtill make more for my Security, if the Teſtifier were a Perſon, of whoſe Wiſdom and Veracity I had had actual Experience my ſelf on many Occaſions; tho' I ſay, this may be thought a better Security than if I were only ſatisfied of it by other Mens Experiences, which ſupport his good Character; yet it is very poſſible for a Caſe to be ſo circumſtantiated, that other Conſiderations may over-ballance even this Advantage, and leave me under a more compleat Degree of Moral Certainty, that I am not deceived, than if I had had ever ſo much *perſonal Experience* of his Honeſty and Prudence, without the Concurrence of thoſe other Circumſtances. And that this is ſo, would be fairly demonſtrable, ſhould a Man enter upon a particular Diſcuſſion of the Circumſtances, which are incident to Caſes of this Nature. However, from what has been ſaid, we may judge, *how this*

Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception, according to the Variety of Caſes that happen, is attended with Conſiderations of a Moral Nature, which tend to alter the Momentum of it, with reſpect to us.*

And thus much may ſuffice for a more general and abſtracted Conſideration of that Principle.

I ſhall now proceed to conſider it in a more immediate Relation to the World and Human Affairs.

PROP. XIII.

A Bare Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception in the Caſe of Teſtimonies alledged for the Proof of Matter of Fact, is not*, in the Nature of Things, *a juſt and rational Ground for any ſuch Suſpicion concerning the Truth of that Matter of Fact, as ſhould at all influence Mankind in their Practice with reſpect thereunto.*

By influencing the Practice of Mankind, I mean, its being the Occaſion of their doing, or forbearing to do, what they would not have done, or would not have forborn doing, provided they had believed that Thing to be true.

Now the Reaſon of this Propoſition is apparent.

Becauſe it can never be juſt and rational for Men to proceed upon a Principle, the genuine Conſequences of which would be deſtructive of the Intereſts of Mankind, and introduce unavoidable Confuſion all the World over.

But now this would be the Caſe, if Men were to be influenced in their Practice by this Principle of a *Phyſical* Poſſibility of being deceived in Matters of Teſtimony.

For as there is no Human Teſtimony whatſoever, but what may poſſibly, in this Senſe of Poſſibility, be deceitful;

ceitful; ſo all Human Teſtimony would be equally affected by this natural Poſſibility of its being deceitful. Becauſe the Foundation of it lying in the Defectibility of Human Nature, it is evident, not only that there can be no poſſible Cure for it, but alſo that it is ſuch a Diſtemper as admits of no Degrees; the beſt and wiſeſt of Men being equally defectible with the reſt of Mankind.

From hence it follows, *That whatever Informations Men receive by Teſtimony, they muſt not ſuffer themſelves to be influenced in their Actions thereby.* For if they are either encouraged to act, or are deterred from acting by any ſuch Motive; then they are not influenced in their Practice by a *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception; which is contrary to the *Hypotheſis.*

Now if this Concluſion be notoriouſly falſe and abſurd, as we ſhall hereafter ſee it is; then (by PROP. VI. and *Corolls.*) the Truth of the preſent Propoſition is ſufficiently made out.

Coroll. 1. *When therefore the Truth of Teſtimony is called in Queſtion, or the Belief of it is ſcrupled, upon the Account of a pure* Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception; Men are led in ſuch a Caſe by an Arbitrary irrational Principle, which owes its Riſe intirely to their own Imaginations, as being the Reſult of ſome Notions or Suppoſitions, which, according to Nature and Truth, ought not to be made.*

Coroll. 2. And therefore likewiſe, *all pretended Eſtimations of the Doubtfulneſs of Teſtimony, upon this Principle, are no more than mere* Fiction *and* Hypotheſis.

For the Queſtion that is to be put here is very ſhort and plain.

Is this Notion of a Phyſical *Poſſibility of being impoſed on in Matters of Teſtimony, a ſufficient Ground to proceed upon in Practice; or is it not?*

If you ſay it is, then ſtand by the genuine Conſequences of it, which have been urged in the Proof of the Propoſition.

If it be not, then it is but a Notion, and a vain and idle one.

The End of Teſtimony is of ſome Uſe or Service, with reſpect to the Conduct of our Actions, or ſome Management of our Affairs in Life. Now if it be demonſtrable by all the Laws of right Reaſon, that this Principle cannot or muſt not be extended to Practice; then it is demonſtrable, that it ſerves no real End, or is to no real Purpoſe, except that of filling up ſome room in a Man's Head, perhaps to his Prejudice, by keeping out other Notions that are better.

And I believe I may venture to conclude, that it has been demonſtrated *that Men are not to govern themſelves by this Principle.* However, for a more abundant Confirmation of it, I ſhall add the following *Scholium.*

Schol. It is plain, from conſtant Experience, in the ordinary Tranſactions and Buſineſſes of Life; *that Men actually overlook this* Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception, and have no manner of regard to it.* And in innumerable Caſes, they are likewiſe compelled to do ſo by invincible Neceſſity. From whence we may argue again after this manner:

That could never poſſibly be intended for a Principle to guide Men in their Actions and Judgments of Things; *which* (by the very Conſtitution and Laws of the World) *they are inevitably conſtrained to have no regard to.*

But the Caſe lies thus, with reſpect to a pure *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception in Matters of Teſtimony.

Therefore, *&c.*

PROP.

PROP. XIV.

THOSE prudential Conſiderations, upon which Men ſometimes proceed in the World, in order to their better Security from Dangers and Inconveniences, will by no means infer a Neceſſity that they ſhould be guided by this Principle of a pure Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception, or prove that they actually are ſo.*

I have added this Propoſition for no other End, than only to prevent the miſtaken Conſequences, which ſome People may be ready to draw from the Obſervations which may be made of Mens Conduct in ſome particular Caſes that occur in worldly Affairs and Concerns. They ſee, for Example, *That under the moſt promiſing Circumſtances of Care and Aſſurances from other People, Men will, however, uſe their own Hands, and Eyes, and Ears, as far as they can poſſibly; and tho' they employ their moſt intimate Friends and Confidents, yet ſeem, for all that, to diſtruſt them, in ſpite of all the good Opinion, which they themſelves, and the World in general, have of their Vertues.*

Now ſuppoſing all this to be true, what Inference is to be made from thence?

You will ſay, perhaps, Why therefore it follows, *That Men do ſometimes guide themſelves by this Principle of a* Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception.*

I anſwer: I ſhall preſently ſhew, *That it is manifeſtly from* other Cauſes, *and not from* this, *that all theſe Effects do proceed.* But ſuppoſe I allow that it is from *this*, what follows upon that?

If ſome Men do actually proceed by this Principle, will that make it a Rule to the reſt of Mankind? Will their Practice warrant it to be juſt and rational, in Op-

poſition to a Demonſtration, which ſhews, *That it tends directly and immediately to the Confuſion of the whole World?*

This is certain, *That no particular Practice can be juſt and warrantable; which if it became general, would introduce univerſal Ruin and Diſorder.*

For what Obligation lies upon Men, to avoid any End which is fatal and pernicious; the ſame lies upon them, to avoid all the Steps and Means that naturally lead to that End.

Now, what Right or Reaſon you have to govern your ſelf by this Principle, the ſame Right has any other Man to do ſo likewiſe: And the ſame Right have all Mankind in general; who may therefore as reaſonably conclude, they ought to act thus as well as you.

Therefore, this Way of Proceeding has a direct and natural Tendency to deſtroy the Order and happy State of the whole World.

And therefore Men are bound to abſtain from it.

And conſequently, all that follows from the Suppoſition, that ſome Men do otherwiſe, is, *that they act unjuſtly and irrationally.*

But the true State of the Caſe lies here.

Men uſe Precautions to guard themſelves, notwithſtanding all the Securities which they may ſeem to have from the Vigilance, Care and Fidelity of other Perſons; not from the pure *Phyſical* Poſſibility of their being betrayed and impoſed upon: but either becauſe their own *Induſtry and perſonal Management* are ſometimes abſolutely neceſſary, and more effectual, in order to the obtaining of their Ends, than the Endeavours of other Men, would be alone without them; or elſe becauſe they have not ſo perfect an Opinion of the *Sincerity and Diſintereſtedneſs* of thoſe they are to rely on, as to think it fit to reſign themſelves intirely to their Care; whatever good Character they may compliment them with in their publick Talk and Addreſs.

Nor,

Nor, indeed, are Men to be blamed for this Wariness, provided it be kept within the Bounds of Prudence and Decency; since the Wickedness of Mankind has made some Degree of it very necessary in order to our better going through the World.

But then, what is really the Effect of this Cause, we must not attribute to another; and call that a pure *Physical* Possibility of Deception, which is, indeed, the mere Effect of our *not sufficiently abstracting from the Faults and Vices of our Fellow-Creatures.* Men who have been used to see, and have much considered the many ill Practices which are too common in the World, and it may be, have had a Hand in them too; may, by so doing, fix a Notion in their Minds of a general Probability of being deceived by every Body. Nay, we know it is a fundamental Principle with some, *That all Men are Knaves and Cheats, or would be so if they could; and that therefore, no Man is to be trusted, or believed to be honest, any farther than he is made to be so with good watching and looking too.*

Whether the Gentlemen who are of this Opinion do leave *themselves* out when they give such a Description of Mankind, or no, is what I dare not say.

If they do, why may not other People be honest as well as they?

If they do not, then their Testimony is bad: We are not to take their Word, because, by their own *Hypothesis*, they design to impose upon us.

However, upon these Considerations, which I have here offered, I think it very evident, *That there is nothing in all the common Practice of Mankind, that can, with any Shew of Reason, be alledged in Defence of their acting upon this Principle of a pure* Physical *Possibility of Deception.*

PROP. XV.

WHen we ſpeak concerning the Decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony, whether Oral *or* Written, *we ought to diſtinguiſh thoſe Cauſes of it, which have their Riſe in their own Minds and Notions; from thoſe which are founded on the Nature and Circumſtances of Things without us.*

The Credibility of a Teſtimony is then really diminiſhed, when it is, by any means whatſoever, robbed or deprived of any of thoſe Circumſtances which once it was attended with, and which all together concurred to the giving of it ſuch a Degree of Authority and Credit amongſt Men, as was proportional to the intrinſick Value and Momentum of thoſe Circumſtances.

What theſe Circumſtances are, may, partly at leaſt, be known from PROP. XI. and therefore I ſhall not repeat them in this Place. All that I ſay here, is, *That no Teſtimony is really, and in the Nature of Things, rendered leſs credible by any other Cauſe, than the loſs or want of ſome of thoſe Conditions which firſt made it* (rationally) *credible in ſuch or ſuch a Degree.* It is this alone that is ſufficient to make it a leſs fit or proper Object of any Man's Belief: For that is what I mean, by its being really, or in the Nature of Things, leſs credible than before. And therefore the juſt and real Decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony will always be proportional to the Loſs or Diminution of the Momentum of theſe Circumſtances. So that where they continue as they were, the Credibility of that Teſtimony is not really diminiſhed. But then, as there is a great deal of Difference between the Credibility of Teſtimony, conſidered with reſpect to the

juſt

juſt and intrinſick Cauſes and Reaſons of that Credibility; and with reſpect to *the Notions and Apprehenſions of the Perſon*, to whom that Teſtimony is propoſed; ſo there is as great a Difference between the Decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony in theſe two Reſpects.

A Teſtimony may be leſs credible in the Thoughts and Opinion of a Man that conſiders it, when at the ſame time, in the Nature of Things, it is not become at all a leſs fit and proper Object of Belief; as having ſtill all the ſame Qualifications and Conditions, which once gave it the Stamp of ſuch a Degree of rational Credibility amongſt Men.

This may ariſe from ſeveral Cauſes; which, *lying all within ourſelves*, we ourſelves are reſponſible for all the Conſequences of it, as far forth as we have contributed to it by any ſort of irrational Management. If we make a Teſtimony leſs credible to ourſelves by any wrong Notions or *Hypotheſis*, by ſlight and ſuperficial Conſideration, or Neglect and Diſregard of any of the material Circumſtances of it, the Blame of this redounds to ourſelves; and it would be abſurd for us to cry out in ſuch a Caſe, *that the Credibility of this Teſtimony is almoſt dwinled away.*

And therefore, I ſay, we ought in theſe Matters to diſtinguiſh very nicely what is real and true in the Nature of Things abroad, from what is the mere Effect of our own unjuſt and partial Reaſonings.

PROP. XVI.

THere is no Decreaſe of the Probability or Credibility of Teſtimony, delivered by faithful, careful, and knowing Witneſſes; though propagated through a Series of Ages, ever ſo far continued.

By

By the foregoing PROP. XV. a Teſtimony continues equally credible, when it is tranſmitted with all thoſe Circumſtances and Conditions, which firſt procured it ſuch a degree of Credit amongſt Men, as was proportional to the intrinſick Value of thoſe Conditions.

By the *Hypotheſis*, the Teſtimony is tranſmitted by ſuch Witneſſes as are every way well qualify'd, *viz. Able to determine the juſt Circumſtances and Conditions of a Teſtimony; honeſt to repreſent them fairly, when ſo determined; and diligent and careful to make all neceſſary Enquiries in order hereto.*

Therefore it is tranſmitted intire and compleat, as to all the intrinſically neceſſary Conditions of its Credibility:

Therefore it is, at leaſt, ſtill equally credible.

Coroll. 1. *All ſuch Calculations therefore are utterly to be rejected, which pretend to eſtabliſh and determine the decreaſing Credibility of Teſtimony in general; without diſtinguiſhing Caſes, as they ought to be diſtinguiſhed, according to the Tenor of this, and the foregoing Propoſition.*

Perſons would do well, when they talk of the vaniſhing Credibility of Teſtimony, to tell whether they mean it is become leſs credible in *itſelf*, (that is, really leſs deſerving of Credit and Belief) or only leſs credible in the *Notions* of the Perſon, to whom the Teſtimony is propoſed, or by whom it is conſider'd.

I allow a Man may make an *Hypotheſis*, and calculate *ad Infinitum* upon it: But then, if that *Hypotheſis* be a wrong one, his Calculations will be all perfectly chimerical; how juſt a dependance ſoever there may be of one Step upon another.

Now there is no *Hypotheſis* in the Nature of Things, upon which the decreaſing Credibility of Teſtimony can be juſtly and truly calculated, but that of the Diminution of Loſs of ſome of thoſe Circumſtances which firſt gave it ſuch or ſuch a Degree of Credibility.

And

And this Conſideration will always terminate in that other, of the Truth and Abilities of the Witneſſes.

And therefore I think it fairly follows, *That no Calculation of the Decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony, wherein at leaſt a Man pretends to talk to the World of Realities, and not of the meer Fictions of his own Brain, can ever proceed upon any other Principle than that of the Characters and Qualifications of the Witneſſes.*

Upon which Account all thoſe Calculations in particular, which go upon a *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception, are Calculations of pure Whimſies and Chimeras; the very Foundation of them being totally wrong, and that which never did, nor can, affect Mankind: As has been expreſsly ſhewn at PROP. XIII. and its *Corollaries.*

Coroll. 2. *As far as the Credibility of any Matter of Fact depends upon pure Teſtimony, thoſe who live at remoteſt Diſtances of Time may have the ſame Evidence of the Truth of it, with thoſe Perſons who received the Teſtimony firſt of all, or who lived the neareſt to the Time wherein the Thing was ſaid to be done.*

Schol. 1. *What has here been proved* directly, *is abundantly confirmed by the common Notions and Experience of Mankind, which therefore may be fitly argued as a plain Demonſtration* à poſteriori *of the ſame Truth.*

A Matter of Fact which has once had ſuch Evidence as Cuſtom and common Conſent have determined to be reaſonable, and ſufficient to recommend it as a proper Object of Belief; does not become leſs credible to remoter Ages, for that Reaſon that they are more remote, than it was to the Ages which approached more nearly to the Time when it was ſaid to be tranſacted.

We, for Example, do not now leſs firmly believe all thoſe Actions of *Alexander*, *Hannibal*, *Pompey*, *Cæſar*, &c. which ever were believ'd by any learned and wiſe Men

in

in the World, than thoſe in the laſt Age did believe them; nor had they any more doubt about them, than the Age before them; nor that Age, than the foregoing one, *&c.* For there never were any Symptoms of ſuch a Diſtruſt ariſing amongſt Men. We hear no body complain of a *Decay* of Evidence; no body wiſhing that they had lived ſeveral Ages before, that they might have had more or better Proof, that *Darius* was beat in ſeveral Battles by *Alexander*, that *Hannibal* was intirely routed by *Scipio*, or *Pompey* by *Julius Cæſar*. All Men believe the Authors that have committed the Stories of theſe Events to Writing, with the ſame Eaſe and Satisfaction of Mind that they did for ſeveral Ages ago: And therefore all Men tell the Stories of theſe great Events with the ſame Confidence. We inſtruct our Youth in the Knowledge of theſe Things, without putting any Suſpicions into them of the decreaſing Probability of the Truth of what we teach them. And tho' we live in Places and Times ſo very remote from the true Scenes and Originals of theſe Affairs; yet we bluſh no more than our Forefathers did, when we revive the *Hiſtories* of ſuch Events, and publiſh *freſh Editions* of them to the World. We do it without the leaſt Caution or Scruple, upon the Score of the Age wherein we live; and tell mankind, that their belief ought to be, in ſome Proportion, reciprocal to the Length of Time that has paſſed ſince the Things were ſaid to be done.

Whereas, to deal fairly and ingenuouſly with the World, this is what we ought to do, if we were poſſeſſed with any ſuch Notions ourſelves: We ought to paſs Sentence upon all the Authors we have, according to the ſeveral Ages in which they lived and writ: Declaring which are ſtill in *full force*, which upon the *Declenſion*; and which *quite gone*; their Credibility being irrecoverably loſt by the exceſſive Length of the Time ſince they wrote. For, in ſhort, either the Credibility of Hiſtory introduces to the good Impreſſions it was de-

deſigned to make on the Minds of Men, or it does not.

If it does not, then Hiſtories may ſtill be read with as much Profit, tho' the Probability of their being true be entirely vaniſhed; and conſequently we need not ſtifle the Matter, upon the Score of any Damage accruing to Mankind thereby.

If it does, then, ſince the Notion of decreaſing Credibility cuts off all the old Hiſtory at once, and ſets it upon the ſame Foot with common Romances, we are bound to tell People plainly, that Time and Pains ought never to be waſted in the Study of Antiquity; becauſe by the *Hypotheſis* it follows, *That no good or valuable End can ever be obtained thereby.*

Schol. 2. It will be farther uſeful to conſider here, *The Difference between real Evidence, or the juſt and true Grounds for the Belief of an Hiſtory, at any time; and the ſenſible Impreſſion or Influence which that Hiſtory may have or make upon Mens Minds.* I make no doubt, but the ſenſible Impreſſion, or the Effects of Matter of Fact, do wear off and abate, in Proportion to the Diſtance of Time. As the Fate of *Carthage*, or the Reſult of the Conteſt between *Anthony* and *Octavius* about the Empire of the World, were undoubtedly more hotly and generally diſcourſed in all Countries, at the latter End of the ſame Age, or one or two Ages after, than they are now in our time, and touched the Paſſions of Men proportionably more. But the *Romans* now at this day, or any other learned Nation beſides, are not leſs certain of the Truth of theſe Events, than any of their or our Anceſtors were, who lived a Thouſand Years ago. *Evidence* is one thing, and *Affection* or *Concern* quite another: However, it is eaſy for People to mix them together, and ſo run into Miſtakes. We are apt to think ourſelves ſureſt of thoſe Things which impreſs us the moſt feelingly; as all thoſe do, which lie neareſt to us, either in

Time

Time or Place. On the other hand we tell ourſelves, that Things tranſacted a great way off, or many Centuries ago, are of little Importance to us, at ſo vaſt a Remove from them; by which means it comes to paſs, that we make but cold and careleſs Reflections upon them, and neglect many things that tend to clear up the Evidence of them to us, or convince us that they were really true. And this Inattention by degrees, throws a kind of a Miſt upon the things themſelves, and makes them appear ſomething obſcure, and therefore doubtful to us, (as all Things muſt of Neceſſity do; the Reaſon of which we never, or but ſeldom, conſider) till at laſt we come to either downright Uncertainty about the Reality of them, or elſe to think, that we want ſome degrees of Evidence in our Time, which the People in former Ages might fairly pretend to. And I make no doubt, but this is one main thing at the Bottom of that Notion which ſome People have of *decreaſing Evidence or Credibility.*

Schol. 3. To what has been hitherto ſaid, we may alſo add this, *viz. That tho' we cannot ſay, in a ſtrict and proper Senſe, that the Credibility of Teſtimony really increaſes, or becomes more than it was, at any given Time, unleſs new Circumſtances and Conditions are ſtill ſuperadded to it*; yet we may ſafely aſſert, *That with the increaſe of Time, Reaſons may alſo increaſe, to confirm Mankind more in their Belief, and to aſſure them farther of the Truth of that Teſtimony.* So that by Conſequence, an Evidence may be ſtronger to ſome, who are more remote in Time from the firſt Teſtimony concerning a Matter of Fact, than to others who lived nearer thereto.

For tho' every Man is to uſe his own Reaſon in judging of the real Credibility of no little Moment, *That it has ſtood the Trials and Examinations of many Ages ſucceſſively; and that vaſt Numbers of Men, of Candor and Integrity, of the politeſt Parts, the greateſt Sagacity, and equal Learning and Application, have, after the profoundeſt Search*

and

and Enquiry into the Matter, unanimonſly ſet their Hands to it, and voted it a rationally credible Teſtimony, according to all the Laws of Reaſoning (in theſe Caſes) *ever uſed amongſt Mankind.* Now this is the Advantage which *ſucceeding* Generations have above thoſe which went *before.* It is granted, the Truth of the Thing is apparent to them, upon the intrinſick Merit of the Proof that is offered for it: But then they conclude that Truth in conſort with ſo many Thouſands that have argued upon the very ſame Premiſſes, and drawn exactly the ſame Concluſion, before their Days; that it would be prodigious, and next to impoſſible, that ſuch Multitudes of different Times, Countries, Educations, Tempers and Prejudices, and Men that knew how to argue rightly too, ſhould all fall into the very ſame Paralogiſm, and blunder preciſely after the ſame manner. Now where a Caſe of Teſtimony is thus circumſtantiated, I ſay, it adds a conſiderable Value and Force to the Proof itſelf; *in that it gives a Proſpect of ſtrange unaccountable Difficulties that attend the Suppoſition of its not being a juſt and rational one.*

For here a Man is preſently loſt in the Thought, when he attempts to reconcile theſe Difficulties to the common Notions and Senſe of Mankind. How ſhould theſe Men all come to join in ſuch a Miſtake? To ſuppoſe them to be ignorant, credulous, heedleſs, not to examine Things, and argue upon them; is contrary to the *Hypotheſis.* To ſuppoſe them to do it by Combination and Deſign, is likewiſe contrary to the Suppoſition of their Candor and good Manners; and is, beſides, unſufferable Nonſenſe, when we are ſpeaking of the different Ages and Countries of the World. What can be ſuppoſed then for the Reaſon of ſo univerſal a Blunder, if it be a Blunder, but as an univerſal Infatuation or Madneſs; that theſe Men were all under the Power of ſome malignant Charm, Planet-ſtruck and out of their Wits? And I think no Man can well make that Suppoſition,

ſition, without bringing himſelf in for a Share of the ſame Calamity. So that I think, we may ſafely lay down this for a Rule, *That ſome Matters of Fact may be attended with ſuch Circumſtances of Evidence, that they may not only be equally, but alſo,* all things conſider'd, *more credible to thoſe who live in remoter Ages; than to thoſe who only lived nearer to the Time wherein the things were ſaid to be done, but were not themſelves Eye-Witneſſes of the ſame.*

SECT. XXV.

THUS I have ſhewn in the foregoing *Propoſitions*, what I think neceſſary, with regard to our preſent deſign, concerning the *Foundation*, *Nature* and *Properties* of *Moral Evidence*.

This was the firſt thing I propoſed to do, under that Head of Argument we are now upon.

Secondly, I ſhall now enquire particularly, into the *Uſe and Neceſſity* of this ſort of Evidence in the World; and ſhew by the wretched and perplexed Conſequences, which follow upon the taking it away, what Obligations we lie under to ſubmit to it, where the Conditions and Circumſtances of a Caſe, make it fair and rational, in the Nature of the thing, for us ſo to do.

SECT. XXVI.

Firſt, WE are all ſenſible, *That the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and conſequently the Support and preſervation of Government, depends intirely upon this kind of Evidence.*

For thoſe that have the Power of making and executing Laws, cannot be preſent in all Places, to be Eye-Witneſſes themſelves, of the evil Actions of Offenders, or the excellent and praiſe-worthy Behaviour of thoſe, who ſerve the Publick well. And therefore, that there may be way made for Juſtice to proceed, in diſpenſing Rewards

Rewards and Puniſhments to good and bad, according to their ſeveral Merits; it is neceſſary, that other Mens Eyes ſhould be ſubſtituted in the room of thoſe of Legiſlators and Governours; who ſhould themſelves, if it were poſſible, ſurvey every place, and take account of what is done by every Perſon. What other Men have ſeen or heard, or can collect by fair and rational Circumſtances, muſt be alledged and laid before them: And this, when done in ſolemn Form and Manner, is reckoned by all the *Wiſdom and Juſtice of Nations* to be ſufficient Evidence; even where things of the greateſt Conſideration do lie at ſtake, as the Lives and Fortunes of Men and Families. And if Teſtimony were not current Proof in ſuch Caſes, what a miſerable Condition would the World quickly be in? How bold would Men of ill Principles make with Laws, and the Honour of the Lawgivers too? How ſecurely would they play their miſchievous Pranks, when out of the reach of the awful Eye of Juſtice? All Safety and Protection were loſt, and every Perſon and Thing expoſed to all manner of Inſults and Depredations. Enemies might plot without controul, threaten high, make inſolent Preparations, and bring matters at laſt to irretrievable Extremities; if Teſtimony were not a Check upon them, and other Mens Eyes and Ears did not guard the Publick. And therefore, if this ſort of Evidence were to be thrown out of the World, the Conſequence would not only be a final ſtop to the Execution of all Law and Juſtice; but no neceſſary Precautions could ever be taken towards the warding off any Miſchiefs, that either threatened the Publick, or were ready to diſturb a Man's own private Peace and Repoſe. Nor could any means ever be uſed, to promote the common Welfare and Happineſs, or to render our own Conditions more eaſy and proſperous in the World. But inſtead of this, all things muſt be ſuffered to go on, whether for better or for worſe, juſt as they will and can of themſelves, without any

Care or Concern of ours. Tho' God has endowed us with Judgment and Diſcretion, by which we are capable of *conſulting and contriving* for our own Advantage, and providing againſt Events, which would render us unhappy, if they befel us; yet we are, upon this *Hypotheſis*, to make no Uſe of our Reaſon for theſe Ends and Purpoſes, but ſtand ſtill, as if we were entirely void of ſuch a Principle; waiting for Reſolutions and Turns of things, which may be either favourable or unfortunate to us, according as it happens.

For Reaſon can be of no Advantage to us, in Caſes of this nature, without the *Knowledge and Converſation of the World*; and the Knowledge and Converſation of the World can ſignify nothing, if *Moral Certainty* be taken away. Becauſe, whatever Knowledge or Information we may gather concerning the State of the World by our converſing with Mankind; yet if we can repoſe no manner of Confidence in what we thus inform our ſelves of, we loſe all the neceſſary motives and encouragements to Action, and conſequently are not a jot the better or the nearer to any good purpoſe, for all the notices we can get of Men and Things in the preſent Life.

SECT. XXVII.

Secondly, *NOR is it only the Deſtruction of Government in particular, but the Diſſolution of all Society in general, which is an immediate and neceſſary Conſequence upon the taking away this ſort of Evidence.*

For a mutual Confidence and Dependance of one Man upon another, is one of the great Bands which holds all communities together, and unites the particular members of them in the ſtricteſt Obligations one to another. And therefore, if this be taken off, ſo that no Truſt can be repoſed, nor any Credit given, that Men may be eaſy and ſecure in ſo doing; then everlaſting Jealouſy and Suſpicion muſt reign in all places. Men muſt be every where upon their guard, looking upon all thoſe about them, either

either as dangerous Enemies, watching for Opportunities to betray and ruin them; or elſe as ſuch, whoſe Friendſhip and Fidelity are by no means ever to be relied on. And take it either way, the Effects will be much the ſame. For in ſuch a State as this, there is no poſſibility of ſuch a thing, as one *Common Intereſt*, or a firm Conjunction of Deſigns and Endeavours to promote it. Becauſe, this perfect Harmony of Temper requires Men to be free and open, and to have a juſt regard to each other, upon the principles of Honour and Credit. But if they were always to live under Apprehenſions of baſe Cheats and Impoſitions from one another; and no Man could adviſe or act, but the reſt about him muſt preſently ſuſpect ſome wicked Deſign at the bottom of it; as they would have all the reaſons in the World to fear and hate one another, ſo they could not but think themſelves happieſt, when fartheſt aſunder. Thus all Zeal and Concern for the Intereſts of the Publick would be entirely ſwallowed up by anxious Thoughts and Cares, continually working in Men's Breaſts, about the Defence of themſelves and their own private Fortunes. And when matters were brought to this paſs a general Disbanding of Mankind would follow thro' the World. We ſhould ſee *Societies* melt away into nothing; the largeſt and moſt auguſt Bodies of Men, as well as the leſs and more deſpicable ones, confuſedly diſperſing and flying from one another. All *Trade and Commerce* would be at an end, as well as Honour and Diſtinction amongſt Men.

As Princes and Subjects would be all upon a level, ſo would *Friendſhip* and Correſpondence amongſt the latter be as impoſſible, as *Government* to the former.

Every Man muſt ſtand upon his own Legs, and ſhift for himſelf as well as he could; and therefore, without Conſideration or Regard to any thing above or below him, attend only to the grand Buſineſs, of looking out after ſhelter for himſelf, where he might be ſafe. The

tle Affections were baniſhed from the World? would be open Violence and Hoſtility; as Opportunity ſhould put an Advantage into any Man's Hands, who together with ſuperior Strength had Malice enough to be an Aggreſſor.

This ſort of State ſome have called by the Name of a *State of Nature*, and painted Men like ſo many Beaſts of Prey, hunting and worrying one another, and committing all the barbarous Ravages that brutiſh Appetite and Force could be imagined to make them capable of. As if they had believed the * *Poet* to be in good earneſt, in that Picture he drew of the Primitive State of the World; and thought they were obliged to copy the Images of his Fiction. To compoſe a regular Scheme for Mankind to go by.

From hence, *Fear*, *Diſtruſt*, and other hoſtile paſſions, have been made the Cauſes of Mens forming themſelves at firſt into *Societies*. That is, *The Cauſes of their living decently and in good Order, and having a due regard one to another, according to their ſeveral Stations and Conditions*: For that is the meaning of living together in *Society*.

A moſt noble Effect to proceed from ſo baſe and vile a Cauſe!

However, it is plain enough, *That theſe Principles tend to the deſtruction of Society; and if they did prevail would actually deſtroy it.*

And I muſt needs ſay, it looks ſomething odd, *That the Riſe and Origin of Society ſhould be that very Principle, which we are ſure tends to the utter Ruin and Confuſion of it.*

* Cum prorepſerunt primis Animalia Terris,
Mutum & turpe Pecus, Glandem atque Cubilia propter
Unguibus & Pugnis, dein Fuſtibus, atque ita porro
Pugnabant Armis, quæ poſt fabricaverat Uſus.
Donec Verba, quibus Voces Senſuſque notarent,
Nominaque invenere, dehinc abſiſtere Bello,
Oppida cœperunt munire, & ponere Leges, &c.

Horat. Sat. 3.

SECT.

SECT. XXVIII.

Thirdly, I Might add in the next Place, *That many of our Civil Liberties and Privileges in the World are so far founded upon this sort of Evidence, that without it we could never possibly make out any Title to them; and not only so, but it is by this alone, abstracting from all other kinds of Proof, that we are able to justify the Claim we lay to them, and consequently owe the Enjoyment of all the Advantages flowing from thence intirely to this sort of Evidence.*

To give full proof of this it is enough to hint those common Cases of *Birth and Parentage, and Succession to Inheritances by Will and Testament*: Arguments which cannot lose their Force with any wise Man, for being vulgar ones, and occurring to us every Day.

I presume it will be allowed, *That as in some Cases, personal* * *Knowledge, or the Testimony of Sense is utterly impossible, and in others is not required and insisted on by Mankind:* So also, *that there is no room for pure Demonstration to come in, in any of them all, neither the* Demonstratio ὅτι, *nor* δὶ ὅτι, ostensivè, *nor* ad absurdum; and therefore *that all our Belief and Assent in these Cases must stand intirely upon the Basis of moral Evidence.*

The matter being so plain, I shall go no farther in the Consideration of it, but only observe two or three things that may be inferred from this sort of Arguments.

First, *That some Matters of Fact may be so evincingly made out by Testimony; as to leave Men under a compleat assurance of the Truth of them.* Or, which is equivalent to it, *That Circumstances may be so mixed and complicated in some Cases of Testimony, that there can be no room to suspect any Fraud or Deceit; and it must be extravagantly ridiculous and absurd, to imagine things not to be as they are represented to be.*

* Ὃ γάρ πω τις ἑὸν γῆνος αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω. Hom.

Secondly, *What a ſtreſs is laid upon the Faith and Credit of Men in matters of very great Importance to the Peace and Welfare of Societies.*

For it would be eaſy to ſhew, that the Caſes I have mentioned are of great Conſequence to the publick Welfare; and that Uncertainty, or the want of ſure and ſtanding proofs in theſe matters, would involve all Nations in Tumult and Diſorder.

Thirdly, *How effectually all the Notions of the uſeleſs and precarious Nature of moral Evidence are confuted by the very Conſtitution of the World, and the unavoidable Circumſtances of human Nature therein.*

So far, that every Man by being born, prepares full Conviction for himſelf againſt the time that he comes to diſpute the Validity of this ſort of Evidence. Nor is there a ſtep he takes in Life afterwards, wherein it is not ſerviceable to him, and even while he is railing againſt it, does not ſome way or other contribute to his Comfort and Felicity here.

SECT. XXIX.

Fourthly, I Might ſhew here in the laſt place, *how far the taking away of moral Evidence would, in a particular manner, affect the learned World.*

It is plain that a great part of our Knowledge, and ſuch as is very uſeful in Human Life, muſt be given up as wholly uſeleſs and inſignificant to us, if matters were to be brought to this paſs.

In a word, whatever can be comprehended under the general Name of Hiſtory is cut off at once; whether that which informs us of the Actions and Cuſtoms of Men, or of the Works of Nature; or the Bounds and Dimenſions of Countries; or Celeſtial Obſervations; or the Computations of Time and Events, with whatever has been introduced amongſt Men in order thereto.

This

This is all loſt, as far as it depends upon the Credit and Teſtimony of other Men; and therefore *Geography*, *Chronology*, and a good part of *Natural Hiſtory*, which are little elſe but a Series or Concatenation of Teſtimonies, become all as uſeful as mere Fable and Romance, and ſhould be thrown out of our Libraries as ſuch.

In ſhort, no ſort of Diſcovery, no Experiment or Obſervation that a Man does not make himſelf, or ſee with his own Eyes; nay, nor no demonſtrable Truth neither which a Man is not able to demonſtrate himſelf; is ever to be admitted or made uſe of, either by way of Argument in Diſcourſe, or as a Premiſe in any Demonſtration, in order either to Theory or Practice.

Every Man muſt ſtand upon the Baſis of his own proper Knowledge, without Light and Information, without Hints and Suggeſtions from other Perſons; being neither *Phyſician*, *Philoſopher*, *Coſmographer*, nor *Hiſtorian*, any farther than he is beholden to pure Nature and Induſtry, to good Luck or Chance, or to all together. And I muſt ſay, that were matters brought to this paſs, that Men were to make a Figure in the World, with thoſe Ornaments only, which they themſelves had thus fairly and legitimately acquired: ſhould every Author that has contributed to the dreſſing of them up, appear again upon the Stage, each to pluck off his own Feather; the ſhew would be much leſs fine and pompous than now it is: and multitudes who have drawn the admiring Eyes of Mankind after them would be left in the ſame bare Condition with the ridiculous Bird in the Fable.

All that I ſhall infer from the preſent Head is this: *That ſince we take ſo many things in Caſes of this Nature for granted, and receive them as true upon no other Proofs than the Teſtimony of other Men; when we meet with other things which upon a juſt comparing of Circumſtances appear to be in all reſpects as well atteſted, and to have, at leaſt as good an Evidence as thoſe which we ordinarily receive without the leaſt ſcruple; when we find all the Marks of Sincerity and Ve-*

racity, all the Agreements and Coincidences of things, that Freedom from reaſonable Exceptions, and that Proſpect of unanſwerable Difficulties attending the refuſal of our Aſſent, which are the motives that commonly determine us to yield it in theſe Caſes: That then, I ſay, *we ought not to reject ſuch Teſtimony, but receive it as we do other Teſtimony, propoſed under the like Circumſtances of Evidence; or elſe if we diſown that on one ſide, to diſown all on the other likewiſe.*

Much leſs ſhould we ever make uſe of Teſtimony in order to expoſe and run down the Credit of Teſtimony; or quote Authorities to prove other Men Fools for depending upon them.

To cry up at one time, and explode at another the very ſame ſort of Argument, attended with the ſame Advantages, and preſſed under the ſame Conditions is a Practice ſo arbitrary and inconſiſtent, and ſhews ſo much Humour and Self-will; that no Man can be guilty of it, without declaring plainly, that it is not Truth, but ſome other Intereſt that has the Aſcendant over him.

SECT. XXX.

HAVING thus finiſhed what I thought neceſſary to be ſaid here concerning the *Nature and Uſe of moral Evidence*; I ſhall now ſubjoin one general *Corollary* to the whole Diſcourſe: And then propoſe ſome few things, which if well conſidered, may, I hope, be ſerviceable as well to prevent or remove Difficulties, as to ſet us right in our Thoughts, and direct us in all our Enquiries into Subjects, where this ſort of Evidence muſt be depended upon.

And with this I ſhall conclude the Second of thoſe four general Heads, which I propoſed to go thro' at the Beginning of this part of the Book: *viz. The Demonſtration of the obligatory Nature of an Evidence, that comes up to the Characters which were before deſcribed.*

Coroll.

Coroll. *From what has been ſaid, we may ſee how much thoſe Men, who expoſe moral Evidence as a precarious, uncertain, deceitful thing, do abuſe the World by ſuch ſort of Suggeſtions; and what Enemies they are to the Peace and Happineſs thereof.*

I take in here, all thoſe ſort of People, who agree in the ſame common deſign and practice of ridiculing this kind of Evidence; how different ſoever the Methods may be which they take to accompliſh their End.

Some, who, I muſt confeſs, are the moſt brave and generous Adverſaries of the two, uſe no manner of Ceremony at all in the matter; but talk openly and bluntly, and thereby put us out of all poſſible doubt of their meaning, and what they would be at.

They do not ſtick to ſay, in plain intelligible Language, *That theſe ſorts of Proofs are fit for none but Fools and Bigots to be perſuaded by— That we can be ſure of nothing we take for Truth this way —— And that all that we have to depend upon is only our being told ſo and ſo by Men who may as probably have been Knaves, and put an egregious Cheat upon us, as not.*

There are others who go more warily to work, and make the Attack by *Queries* and *Surmiſes*, by little Doubts and Jealouſies ſtated about the Uncertainty of all thoſe Reaſonings, that do not come up to ſtrict and perfect Demonſtration.

Theſe Gentlemen, who, to be ſure, are deeply concern'd for the welfare of *Chriſtianity*, ſeem to be in pain for it, when they conſider, how little Credit it meets with in the World; and how ſlightly ſome People, whom they fear to be very bad Men, will talk of the Evidences that are offer'd to recommend it to the Belief of Mankind, --- *There is no doubt, but* Chriſtianity *is ſufficiently well proved --- And no rational conſidering Man ever offered to diſpute the Truth of it — But —— There are thoſe, who will talk very oddly ſometimes of the Doubtfulneſs of Human Teſtimony; and intimate, as if ſome things were very queſtionable upon that ſcore*

They

——They will not allow us to have more, than a Peradventure, or a May-be, for the Truth of all things which reſt upon Moral Proof——— But alas! Infidelity and Scepticiſm do much prevail in this wicked Age—— And People are mighty apt to doubt in Caſes where they have not Demonſtration to make them ſure.

Admirably well argu'd indeed! The *Chriſtian Religion* is very much beholden to theſe Gentlemen for their great Care to ſupport the Credit of it in an Age of prevailing Scepticiſm and Infidelity. Such ſort of Inſinuations are like to do it ſervice; or rather to inſtil the moſt inveterate Prejudices againſt it into the Minds of Men, and prepare them for a more ſound and thorow Inſtitution in *Deiſm*.

A Man that openly raves and ſtorms at *Religion*, calls it *Impoſture* and *Prieſtcraft*, and expreſſes himſelf in all the rough Terms, commonly uſed by the leſs well-bred Enemies of *Chriſtianity*; is nothing in compariſon to theſe maſquerading People, that talk modeſtly and calmly, and while they ſeem to be ſpeaking handſomly on the behalf of *Religion*, are trying to undermine the very Foundations of it.

The former Perſon fairly ſounds an Alarm, threatens what he will do, and bids you beware of him. Tho' he intends only to expoſe, yet in effect, he ſerves *Chriſtianity* by his very Calumny and Reproaches: becauſe he tells the World plainly, he has no Arguments againſt it, but what are of this diſreputable kind; and that if he had Reaſons, he would not fail to make uſe of them.

But the other, inſinuate themſelves into a Man before he is aware, work him off from his Guard, tincture and ſeaſon him with the moſt pernicious and deſtructive Principles, and have in effect, run down and made all *Chriſtianity* a Cheat; by that time a Man comes to ſuſpect or imagine, they had any Deſigns againſt it.

For in ſhort, do but artfully poſſeſs Men with a Notion of the doubtful and precarious Nature of Moral Evidence, and you may eaſily bring them to believe what

you

you pleaſe, about the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*. That is, *do but repreſent Matters to them, under falſe and deceitful Colours; give them crude, undigeſted Notions, and a mere ſuperficial Account of things; and by this means, you may make them fit to ſet up againſt the* Chriſtian Religion. An odd way of inſtituting and accompliſhing Men! But that this is the true State of the Caſe, will plainly appear upon a little Examination of it.

SECT. XXXI.

THE great Cry amongſt theſe Gentlemen, is—— *You cannot be ſure——You muſt needs be under miſerable Uncertainties in all Caſes of this Nature —— &c.*

Now I would fain know, what they mean by this: for it is certain, that if they would but explain themſelves, the Caſe is ſo obvious, that either they or we, muſt preſently be run up to ſome grand Abſurdity, if we ſtand fairly to the Argument on both ſides.

Firſt, Do they mean, by our not being ſure, that we cannot be *Mathematically Certain*? If they do, Who ever ſuppoſed, or talked of *Mathematical Certainty*, or ſuch ſort of Certainty, as that which reſults from ſtrict Demonſtration in theſe matters?

We ſay indeed, that in innumerable Caſes of this kind, we have an Aſſurance or Satisfaction of Mind, ariſing from Moral Proofs, equivalent to that which ariſes from perfect *Geometrical Demonſtration* itſelf: And this is fairly demonſtrable. See PROP. IX.

But I dare ſay, that no Man ever fancied, much leſs aſſerted a Certainty of the ſame kind with that in *Mathematicks*; and the contrary is expreſsly ſhewn with the Reaſons of it, at *Schol.* PROP. IV.

So that if they mean this, they mean that which no body ever ſaid or thought of; and therefore, is nothing to the purpoſe.

Or,

Or, *Secondly*, Do they intend, by talking thus, *that we have no ſolid and ſubſtantial Grounds upon which we may ſafely proceed to argue ourſelves into a Belief of the Truth of things?* Do they mean, *That there are no valuable Conſiderations in the Nature of things, which are ſufficient to make it ſtrictly juſt, rational, and neceſſary for us to yield the Aſſent of our Minds in ſuch Caſes as theſe are?*

If this be what they would have; I muſt needs ſay, that I think they are obliged by all the Rules of Honour and good Breeding in the World to ask pardon of thoſe Perſons, on whom they impoſe ſuch abſurd and manifeſt Untruths, for complimenting of them with ſo little Senſe and Underſtanding.

For every Man that has any degree of either is able to ſhew, that this is wrong in Fact, from his own Knowledge of the World. And if theſe Gentlemen muſt needs divert themſelves with making unjuſt Repreſentations of things one would think, they might have choſen their Subject a little more prudently, and not have fixed upon one, which lies ſo much within the reach of all common Obſervation and Experience, which may be produced to confute them every Day; nay, and by which they are eternally confuting and contradicting themſelves.

So that whatever they mean (ſince it will be hard to pitch upon any meaning, that will not be reducible to one of theſe two heads) I think I may fairly conclude, *that it is either manifeſtly wrong in point of Fact, or elſe nothing to the purpoſe.* And this being the true and impartial State of the Caſe, they may, if they think it wiſe ſo to do, go on with the cry of—— *You cannot be ſure.*

SECT. XXXII.

TO conclude, I would deſire theſe Gentlemen to conſider the following Argumentation.

We can be ſure, *That Order and Government, Society and Commerce muſt be preſerved in the World, as long as there is a Race*

Race of reaſonable and ſociable Creatures therein. And therefore, *That ſomething muſt be credible between Man and Man.*

From hence we can be ſure, *That there muſt neceſſarily be ſome juſt Marks of that Credibility.*

And therefore, *That we are bound to have a due regard to them, wherever they appear.*

Not only, becauſe it is equitable and rational in the Nature of the thing ſo to do; but alſo, becauſe intolerable Inconveniences would certainly follow upon our diſowning the Truth of things, the Evidences for which come up to thoſe Characters.

From hence we may be ſure, if we are not antecedently reſolved to live in Doubt and Uncertainty, *That we are obliged by all the Laws of Human Nature, and the World wherein we live, to yield the Aſſent of our Minds in all ſuch Caſes, where we ſhould infallibly run upon ſome of thoſe foremention'd Inconveniences, provided we refuſe it.*

And becauſe the Author of Nature has not made the World after ſuch a manner, nor can permit that we ſhould be deceived in Caſes where it is made ſtrictly juſt and rational for us to yield the Aſſent of our Minds: Therefore we can be ſure, *That in all Caſes, eſpecially in thoſe of great Importance, where the Evidences come up to thoſe Conditions; we ſhall not be deceived, in aſſenting to the Truth of things, as made out to us by thoſe Evidences.*

And from all this, we can fairly conclude, *That the Foundations of Moral Evidence,* and conſequently the Reaſons of our dependance upon it, *are not precarious and uncertain, but moſt ſecurely laid, in the Nature and Order of things.* Q. E. D.

SECT. XXXIII.

LET me now add ſome few *Rules* or *Directions* to Perſons of ſincere and honeſt Minds, in order to the inforcing what has been ſaid upon this Subject, and the better

better preparing of them to defend it, againſt whatever they may hear at any time advanced, by way of oppoſition to it.

Firſt, *Remember that there is no Argument ever to be drawn againſt the Goodneſs and Sufficiency of Moral Proofs from the Conſideration of that Corruptions, Treachery, and Falſhood, which is ſo common in this degenerate World.* And therefore, if this ſhould be inſiſted on, you may ſafely allow the Objection to be true, *viz. That there is, and always has been, abundance of Fraud and Deceit in the World*, and at the ſame time, deny the Conſequences that are inferred from it; if they are carried ſo far, as to conclude generally, *That Moral Evidence is fallacious, and ought not to be depended upon.*

SECT. XXXIV.

Secondly, YOU ſhould not be ſtartled, when you hear People tell you, *That Moral Proofs do not ſhew you, that things cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe than they are proved to be; or that they do not ſhew, that things muſt neceſſarily be ſo as theſe Proofs do make them out to be; and conſequently, that you can have no ſatisfaction in depending upon them,*

For this is manifeſtly a Paralogiſm. It does not follow, that a Proof which does not ſhew a Man, that things cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe, or muſt in the ſtricteſt Senſe, neceſſarily be ſo as they are repreſented to be, muſt therefore leave him under Doubt and Uncertainty.

It is not true; it is contrary to plain Fact and Experience in ten Thouſand Caſes, that we are conſcious of ourſelves. And therefore here I refer to PROP. VII. and VIII. with the *Corollaries* of the ſame, for farther ſatisfaction.

And becauſe this is a Point of great Importance, and ſuch as if a Man thought ſeriouſly and deliberately of, he would

would, I dare be confident, preſently ſee thro', and demonſtrate the Shallowneſs of the moſt ſeemingly frightful Objections againſt *Moral Evidence:* I ſhall therefore, in purſuance of what I have deliver'd at *Coroll.* 2, of PROP. VII. add this farther Direction.

SECT. XXXV.

Thirdly, IN all your Arguings for, or hearing other Peoples Arguings againſt *moral Evidence*; *be ſure to keep to that which, in reality, is your true Scope and Deſign, and the Point you ought mainly to be concerned about.* Remember that your great End in making uſe of this ſort of Proofs, is to be well ſatisfy'd, *of the Truth and Reality of things*; to know that they are ſo in Fact, as they are repreſented to be, or that they are not otherwiſe.

But to conſider whether it be impoſſible or contradictory, that they ſhould be otherwiſe, or poſſible that they ſhould not be at all; this is perfectly foreign to the true Scope and Deſign of all theſe Enquiries. And this is plainly demonſtrable from hence, *That the End of moral Evidence being not pure Speculation, but Practice, or the better qualifying ourſelves to regulate and conduct our Actions in Life; this End may be perfectly attained by purſuing the Enquiry about the Truth and Reality of things.*

For when we are ſatisfy'd, upon ſtrictly juſt and rational Grounds, that they are either actually ſo, or not ſo as they are repreſented to be; then we leave all the Information that is neceſſary, in order to the Management of our Affairs; and know how we are to proceed, whether by doing this or the other thing, or by letting it alone. But it would be of no manner of Uſe or Service to us, with reſpect to Practice, even if the Nature of theſe Caſes would bear it, to have ſuch Proof of the Truth of things, as ſhould convince us at the ſame time, that it was ſtrictly impoſſible they ſhould be otherwiſe. For the Ground of all

all our Actions, being the Conſideration of the Importance or Concern, which things are of, to our Welfare and Happineſs; it is manifeſt that this Circumſtance of the abſolute Poſſibility or Impoſſibility of their not being or being otherwiſe than theſe Proofs repreſent them to us, does not at all tend to heighten our Senſe of the Value and Importance of them, provided we have but convincing Proof, *that they really are.*

Therefore this Circumſtance is of no moment at all with reſpect to Practice.

And conſequently the want of it is not a Foundation for any juſt Objection againſt *Moral Evidence.*

SECT. XXXVI.

Queſt. SINCE it is a Point of ſuch Importance to avoid being deceived in many Caſes where Men are to truſt intirely to moral Evidence; *We deſire to know, what Method a Man ought to obſerve, that he may be ſure to diſtinguiſh the Right from the Wrong, and form ſuch a Judgment of an Evidence propoſed, as is neceſſary, in order to the making of a juſt and true Concluſion?*

Anſw. It is a matter of very great Importance to judge and go right in ſome Caſes of this Nature; for it is plain, *That no leſs a thing than Salvation itſelf depends upon the forming of a right Judgment in a ſingle Caſe of moral Evidence.*

I ſhall therefore here propoſe ſome few Rules and Directions, which if Men would carefully put in practice, I make no doubt to aſſure them, *That their Endeavours will be attended with the deſired Succeſs.*

SECT.

SECT. XXXVII.

AND *First*, I think the firſt ſtep of all ſhould be, *An humble and ſincere Addreſs to the great Author of your Being, for his favourable Aſſiſtance and Concurrence with you.*

In all your Enquiries after Truth, but eſpecially in thoſe which are of great Concern, it is but reaſonable that you ſhould acknowledge him who is Truth it ſelf, and the Fountain of Truth to all intelligent Creatures. It is by the kindly influences of his Providence, that your faculties are preſerved in a juſt degree of ſtrength and vigour; and that you are capable of exerting them to any good purpoſe in any of the affairs or buſineſſes of Life. And if it be your Duty at all times to acknowledge this, to praiſe him for his Goodneſs, and implore the continuance of it to you; how much more devoutly ſhould you ſeek his Aſſiſtance, when you are going to purſue an Enquiry, in the Iſſues of which your everlaſting Felicity is concerned? In ſhort, this is a Duty of *Natural Religion*; ſo that thoſe who do not believe the Goſpel, by their own Principles need not ſcruple the Practice of it.

SECT. XXXVIII.

Secondly PROPOSE *it to your ſelves, as the only Deſign of all your Reaſonings and Enquiries to find out Truth.*

Becauſe, if you have any other end in View, it will infallibly ſo biaſs you in all your Proceedings, that you will not be able to think, argue, or judge in that free and impartial Manner that you ought to do, and would otherwiſe do, if you were wholly diſintereſted, and had

only propoſed to your ſelves to find out the Truth of the Matter.

Beſides, unleſs you think it a piece of needleſs Ceremony to ask the Direction of Heaven in a Caſe of great Moment, you cannot, without horrid Hypocriſy, deſire God to aſſiſt you in your Buſineſs, where it is not your Deſign to be truly and rightly informed.

SECT. XXXIX.

Thirdly, IN purſuance of this great Deſign of finding out Truth, which is what all Men of Wiſdom and Sincerity will have in their Eye, *Endeavour as much as in you lies to diveſt your ſelves of all thoſe prejudices, which any Notions or Opinions, contrary to that which lies before you to be examined, may very probably have fixed in your Minds.*

That is, abſtract from them ſo far, that they may have no Influence upon you in the Inquiry you are making, and the Concluſion you are afterwards to draw from your Reaſonings upon the Caſe in Hand.

Now this is very poſſible for you to do.

For it is in your Power to govern your Fancies, and let genuine Reaſon take Place.

You can, if you will, look upon things without thoſe falſe Colours, that the Imagination is too apt to diſguiſe them withal, and which repreſent them to you, as very much different from what they really are in themſelves. I confeſs, it is a Work of Time and Labour for Men to *conquer their Prejudices throughly*; but to prevent their governing and ſwaying the Mind, while a Matter of the higheſt Importance is under Examination, is what every Man may do, that will exert himſelf, and uſe his Liberty well.

SECT.

SECT. XL.

Fourthly, *EXamine all the Circumſtances of the Caſe propoſed, in the moſt careful and deliberate Manner that you can.*

Do not let your Thoughts be employed upon things of little Moment, while you paſs by thoſe that deſerve your beſt Attention, and moſt ſerious Regard. Select all thoſe Circumſtances, and thoſe only, which are material with reſpect to the Concluſion; and when you have done ſo, give them their due Force and Weight: And let them Influence your Underſtanding according to what they plainly appear to be, in your moſt abſtracted Views of them, and not as they tend to carry the Concluſion, either this or that particular way, whether for or againſt the Notions you have hitherto entertained.

SECT. XLI.

Fifthly, HAVING thus accurately weighed and conſidered the Circumſtances of the Caſe, *Make ſuch Inferences from them, as your ſobereſt Reaſon, without any Art or Management, does it ſelf freely prompt you to make.*

Conclude in ſuch a manner, as to leave your Mind truly ſerene and compoſed under what you have done; and that upon cool Reflections, it may tell you afterwards, you have drawn a *Concluſion, reaſonable and fit to ſtand by.*

SECT. XLII.

Laſtly, YOU ought to make and keep to this Reſolution, *Not to drop the Enquiry till you*

have brought it to ſome determinate Iſſue; even tho' you meet with conſiderable Difficulties in the way.

For tho' you may not be able to paſs a clear and ſatisfactory Jugdment, at one time; yet you may at another, when the Mind is more diſpoſed to be fixed and attentive, and the Body, perhaps, in better Temper. We all know, by every day's Experience, that we are not at all times equally capable or ready Judges, even of the very ſame things. There are ſome lucky Seaſons, wherein Difficulties do, as it were, explain themſelves to us, which at other times would not yield to the greateſt Labour and Importunity.

As ſometimes on the other Hand, things that are not very myſterious will force a Man to give over his ſearch, and wait a more favourable Opportunity.

And therefore, we are not preſently to throw aſide ſo neceſſary and important a Work as this is, becauſe we do not at the firſt or ſecond attempt, it may be, bring it to ſo happy a Concluſion as was expected.

SECT. XLIII.

TO this I may add alſo, as another very neceſſary piece of Advice, *That if you cannot come to a ſatisfactory Concluſion by your ſelves, you would not ſcruple to conſult thoſe, who may be able to put you in the right way of doing ſo.*

It is not unlikely, that ſome People, who have been uſed to think of a particular Subject, ſhould be able to reaſon with more Eaſe and better Method upon it, than thoſe who are perfect ſtrangers to it. And it is no more ſhame to a man to make uſe of the Counſel and Aſſiſtance of others, in ſuch a Caſe as this, where the Peace of his Mind is concerned; than to ask the Advice of a *Phyſician*, in order to the Removal of any bodily Diſtemper.

SECT.

SECT. XLIV.

IT will be objected perhaps, *that it will coſt a deal of Time and Pains to put theſe Rules in Practice; and that Men will rather be frightned from, than encouraged to the Practice of ſo difficult a Work.*

Anſw. Firſt, *Conſider how little you are diſcouraged at the Proſpect of a vaſt deal of Pains and Labour in other Affairs which are of infinitely leſs Moment.* You can riſe early, and ſit up late, to contrive for a worldly Intereſt, without any of theſe complaints. You can bend your Thoughts, even to the endangering of your Life or Health, and ſlave and drudge without Intermiſſion upon any little matter that is to ſet you off, and purchaſe you a Reputation amongſt Men. And if you can be ſo indefatigably diligent and reſolute in thoſe Concerns, and muſt preſently be tired and diſpirited in Affairs of this nature, upon every difficulty that lies in your way; the Reaſon is plainly, becauſe *you will not apply your ſelves to them, and therefore, all the ill Conſequences of the Neglect, muſt lie intirely at your own Doors.*

SECT. XLV.

Secondly, WHatever pains it coſts you, to go through this Work, you ought to remember, *That if you ever make your Mind eaſy, you muſt be forced to proceed after this, or ſome ſuch way as this is.* For in the very Nature of the thing, there is no other way to come to a Certainty, but this of diſtinguiſhing, examining, and making juſt and natural Inferences from the Circumſtances of a Caſe.

SECT. XLVI.

BUT, Thirdly, *Is there not enough in the Succeſs and good Effects of the Enquiry, to recompence you for all the Pains you are at in the making of it?*

Conſider, that to manage this Affair well, is what is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to your forming a right Judgment of things, and to prevent your running into Inconveniences, which may make you uneaſy in this Life, and perhaps miſerable in the next.

And would not every wiſe Man therefore, reſolve to think and argue as cloſe as poſſible, and run Conſequences as far as they will fairly go; when the Reſult of his doing thus tends ſo much to his preſent Peace and Quiet, as well as his Everlaſting Security?

SECT. XLVII.

YOU will be ready to ask now, *Suppoſe a Man to have gone this way to work, with all the Care and Caution imaginable what will be the Iſſue of it, and what may he depend upon at laſt for his ſatisfaction?*

Anſw. If after ſuch faithful and diligent Management of the Enquiry, which lies before you, you find your ſelf fairly induced to conclude, *The Evidence to be of ſuch a Nature, as obliges the Underſtanding of a rational Creature to yield its Aſſent:* I ſay, you may ſafely yield your Aſſent thereto; depending upon it, that you ſhall not find your ſelf deceived in ſo doing.

But then obſerve, that it lies upon you your ſelf, to be at a certainty about theſe two Points. Firſt, *That you have carefully obſerved the forementioned Rules, in your Enquiry and Examination of things.* Secondly, *That you have taken Care to ſee, whether the Evidence in the preſent Caſe comes*

up

up to the Characters and Conditions of ſuch an Evidence, as was before demonſtrated, directly and poſitively to oblige Mankind to yield their Aſſent. For if you are uncertain about either of theſe particulars, we cannot pretend to anſwer for the conſequence: Otherwiſe we dare aſſure you, that you may be eaſy in the concluſion you draw.

SECT. XLVIII.

Queſt. *BUT upon what juſt Grounds may a Man be aſſured, that he ſhall not be deceived in paſſing ſuch a Judgment; ſuppoſing theſe two things you ſpeak of to be done?*

Anſw. The Grounds you have for ſuch an Aſſurance, are theſe.

Firſt, *That the bountiful and wiſe Author of Nature has furniſhed you,* as a rational Agent, *with Faculties, by which you are enabled to diſtinguiſh Right from Wrong, and Truth from Falſhood, in all Caſes that are of real Concern to you.*

For without ſuch a Power as this, it is utterly impoſſible that you ſhould ever behave your ſelf as an *intelligent* Creature ought to do. Becauſe, to act in due Order and Decorum, neceſſarily requires *a capacity of knowing* and diſtinguiſhing things. And therefore, if you are deſtitute of ſuch a Capacity, you are under no *Moral* Obligations either to God or Man. For you cannot be obliged to impoſſibilities: And it is abſolutely impoſſible to act rightly, unleſs it be by mere accident, without knowing what is right, and what is not.

So that the Conſequence will be this, *viz. That you muſt either ceaſe to own your ſelf a rational intelligent Being, and be content to be ranked with ſome lower Species of Animals, for the future,* or elſe you muſt ſtand by this as a certain Truth, *That God has made ſuch a Proviſion in the Conſtitution of your reaſonable Nature, that you are thereby made really capable of doing what I ſay.*

SECT. XLIX.

Secondly, YOU may be certain likewiſe, *That God Almighty is not, nor cannot be, the Author of any of your Deluſions or Miſtakes.*

He will neither deceive your Faculties with falſe and wrong Objects; nor miſlead them in their Operations about right and proper Objects.

He will not preſent Impoſture to you under the ſpecious appearance of Truth; nor alter the Nature and Order of things, on purpoſe to make you out in your Concluſions about them.

If you do not firmly believe theſe things of your Maker, you cannot believe his Moral Perfections. And if you deny thoſe, or any of his, Perfections, you deny his Exiſtence.

And if you believe no God, it is not to be expected, that you ſhould believe any thing elſe. And if you once come to ſuch a Degree of *Scepticiſm*, you are indeed out of the reach of this Argument, and of all others whatſoever.

SECT L.

Thirdly, OBſerve now from hence, *What aſſurance you may have with reſpect to the matter we are ſpeaking of.* For if you are qualified with ſufficient Abilities, for the ſearch and diſcovery of neceſſary Truth; alſo if the Author of Nature, will be neither the Cauſe or Occaſion of your running into any Miſtakes: It follows, *That you may come to a determinate Concluſion about the Truth or falſhood of a Caſe, wherein you are deeply concerned; provided you be not wanting to your ſelf, and will uſe a regular Method in the Enquiry.* And conſequently, when you are come to ſuch a Concluſion, you may be at a certainty, as to the Point

Point of your own Deception. For you will never be deceived by any thing elſe, if you do not deceive yourſelves, but take care to uſe the Helps, and exert the Powers which God has given you, in ſuch manner as you are bound to do, and are capable of doing.

SECT. LI.

Fourthly, NOR will the acknowledged Fallibility of Human Nature, or its liableneſs to Deception or the actual Miſtakes and Deceptions of People at any time, in Enquiries of this nature; be any juſt Ground at all, for you to pretend, you cannot be at a Certainty, and ſo by that means think to excuſe yourſelf from the Labour of trying.

For the Caſe plainly terminates in this ſhort *Dilemma*, one ſide of which you muſt of neceſſity chuſe.

Either the Fallibility of Human Nature is really ſuch, that you are conſtrained thereby to remain always doubtful of the Truth of the Concluſion you draw; Or it is not.

If you ſay it is, *Then you either diſown all Obligations to any ſort of Duty, which a reaſonable Creature ſhould perform*: Or elſe, *You fall foul upon the Perfections of God, in ſuppoſing him to have bound you to the diſcharge of various Duties; and yet to have made you incapable of ſuch an Exerciſe of your Faculties, as is abſolutely neceſſary in order thereto.*

If you confeſs it is not, *Then all the Defectibility, or Liableneſs to Deception, that is in Human Nature, can never be a Reaſon, why you ſhould pretend to be always in ſuſpence about the Concluſions you draw; but will only be a Reaſon, why you ſhould uſe your utmoſt Care and Caution in the drawing of them*: Which is the very thing that we moſt earneſtly perſwade you to.

And then, as to the actual Miſtakes that ſome People may have made in Diſquiſitions of this kind, or the groſs Deluſions they may have been led into, by depending upon

upon the Truth of things, as made out to them by *Moral Evidence:* Theſe ſure cannot be Stumbling-blocks in the way of any Man, that is not willing to lay hold of every ſlight Occaſion to deter himſelf from the doing of his Duty.

That ſome People who have truſted to Moral Evidence, have been deceived in ſo doing, I hope you think no more an Argument againſt Proofs of this nature in general; than you think Blunders and Paralogiſms, to be a Scandal to the Nature of *Demonſtration*; or the Intemperance of ſome particular Perſons, an Argument againſt the Uſe of thoſe neceſſary Bleſſings of Life, which they ſo faultily abuſe.

SECT. LII.

BUT being now upon this Head, it may perhaps be of ſome uſe, to point out in conciſe Terms, *the more general Cauſes and Springs of Miſtake in matters of Argumentation*; or to ſhew by what means it is, *That Men become acceſſary to their own Deluſions, in the Concluſions they draw, as the Reſult of their Enquiries into things.*

Now, this may be,

Firſt, *By arguing with* Media, *which in their own Nature are not juſt, or proper to afford a poſitive Concluſion to be drawn from them.*

And therefore a Man may be miſtaken this way, if he argues with *Data*, which are either

Foreign and impertinent to the Buſineſs in hand.

Or *too few and defective*; and therefore, inſufficient to furniſh him with matter for a fair Concluſion.

Or *more than are needful*; by which means the Mind is perplexed and confounded, and a Man is ſometimes led into Concluſions which contradict one another: in which Caſe it is very likely, that he fixes upon that part of the Contradiction, which moſt favours his own prejudiced and

and miſtaken Notions, and ſo comes to impoſe upon himſelf.

SECT. LIII.

Secondly, AS a Man may be deceiv'd, as to his main Concluſion, by arguing even truly and juſtly, from *Data* that are unjuſt and improper: *ſo he may likewiſe go as wide of the Truth, by arguing after an irregular manner upon* Data, *which*, in their own Nature, *are ever ſo juſt, adequate, and pertinent to the Matter which is enquired into.*

The moſt obvious Cauſes of this, are *Ignorance*, *Inconſideration*, *Precipitancy*, *Partiality*, ariſing from prejudicate Notions and Opinions, and whatever elſe may be reduced to, or are cognate with theſe.

Nor is it a Jot more ſtrange, for Men to draw wrong Concluſions from juſt and natural Premiſſes, than to infer things from ſuch Principles, as will never fairly afford them any Concluſion at all.

However, it may be ſufficient, in order to the end of our going right, in theſe ſort of Enquiries, to have ſhewn as well the general Cauſes of Miſtakes, as a plain and practicable Method, by which we may avoid them.

SECT. LIV.

THE third general Head propoſed, was the Conſideration of the Impoſſibility, *That Providence ſhould ever countenance, or ſuffer any ſort of Impoſture to be countenanced with an Evidence of ſuch Qualifications and Conditions, as we have been hitherto diſcourſing of.*

And this can need no Proof to thoſe who pretend to believe the Exiſtence of ſuch a Being, as he that made and governs the World, muſt neceſſarily be: So that this Labour is ſaved. All that can conclude, *That God is Eter-*

nal

nal Truth, infinite Love and Goodneſs, unſpotted Juſtice and Holineſs; that he could not make Creatures to delude and tantalize, nor give them Faculties which ſhould never be of any uſe to them: All, I ſay, that can conclude this, as all may, that can conclude that God is, may alſo from thence preſently infer the ſimple abſolute Impoſſibility of his ever dealing after this manner with a Race of reaſonable Creatures.

So that nothing remains for me to do upon this Head, but only to deduce a few *Corollaries*; and ſo conclude the *Second Part* of this Diſcourſe.

SECT. LV.

IF Deluſions and Impoſtures can never be paſſed upon Mankind, with Evidence of ſuch a Nature as has been deſcribed: then it follows,

Coroll. 1. *Wherever we can be ſure of an Evidence thus qualify'd, there we may be ſure, we ſhall not be deceived, in giving our Aſſent thereto.*

Coroll. 2. *Where the Events of things do not anſwer to our Schemes of Reaſoning upon them; the Evidences upon which we proceeded to argue in thoſe Caſes, were not, in their Nature ſufficient to afford us ſuch a Concluſion.*

So that ſome Fallacies or Miſtakes muſt be committed: tho' not then perceiv'd or ſuſpected by us.

Coroll. 3. *Where we are ſure of an Impoſture, by the plain and undeniable Marks of it; there we can be certain that the Evidences offer'd to perſuade Men of the Truth of it, would, if thoroughly examin'd, appear to be weak and frivolous.*

Coroll. 4. Where things of great Importance are to be believ'd by Mankind, we may be certain, *That Divine Providence will order the matter ſo, that they ſhall be propoſed*

to

to us with ſuch Evidences, as will be ſufficient to oblige our Underſtanding, as we are reaſonable Creatures, *to aſſent to them as true.*

Tho' this does not follow directly from the PROP. itſelf, yet it follows immediately from that which is the grand Reaſon of the PROP. *viz. The infinite Perfection of the ſupreme Author of the Univerſe.*

For the Divine Mercy and Goodneſs are every whit as much concern'd to give important Truths a Degree of Evidence, fit to recommend them to us, as every way proper Objects of Belief; as thoſe, and other divine Perfections are, to deny ſuch Evidence to Impoſtures, that they may not be believ'd by us. And therefore, I infer, *That as for all things, which any way relate to the Salvation of Mankind, and are to be proved by* Moral Evidence; *we ſhall be ſure to find, upon Examination, that they have a Degree of Evidence, proportional to the intrinſick Weight and Importance of them, and in all reſpect ſufficient to convince our Judgments of their Truth and Reality.*

And I ſhall now proceed to enquire according to the fourth and laſt Article of the Method propoſed, whether, there be not ſuch an Evidence as this for the *Reſurrection of* Jeſus Chriſt.

The End of the Second Part.

PART

PART III.

Containing the Proofs for the Fact of Christ's Resurrection.

The CONTENTS.

Some general Things, wherein the Christians *and* Deists *both agree.*

Concerning the Writings of the Evangelists, or first Christian Historians.

The Evidences for the Fact of Christ's Resurrection *proposed and examined.*

A Demonstration, that this Evidence has all the Conditions of an Evidence, which obliges Human Understanding to yield its Assent.

SECT. I.

IN the Management of this Part of the Design, which now lies before us, there will be these three Things in the general to be done.

First, To shew upon what Foundations, the *Christians* ground their Belief of the *Resurrection of Christ Je-*

Jeſus; or what *Mediums* thoſe are, by which they argue themſelves into this Perſuaſion, *That it was real Matter of Fact, that he roſe again from the Dead.*

Secondly, To enquire whether theſe Reaſonings of theirs upon this Subject, are ſtrictly fair and juſt; that is, *Whether the Evidence upon which they receive this Doctrine as true, has all thoſe Qualifications, which render it directly and poſitively obligatory to our Underſtandings, by all the known Laws of reaſonable Nature, and the Conſtitution of the World we live in.*

Thirdly, *Having diligently examined and compared the Grounds upon which the* Chriſtians *believe, and the* Deiſts *reject this Doctrine*; *I ſhall impartially ſhew the Reſult of all, and then make ſome Inferences as are proper to be made from thence.*

SECT. II.

IN arguing this great Point, after a Method ſo natural and fair, as that which is here propoſed, and upon ſuch Principles as are laid down, and, I hope, ſufficiently demonſtrated, in the *foregoing Part of this Treatiſe:* It muſt needs be, *That either the* Chriſtians *who maintain it, or the* Gentlemen *on the other ſide, who deny it*; *muſt, in ſo doing, be forced upon ſomething very abſurd and irrational*; *the Standard to judge by, being the plain Reaſon and common Practice of Mankind.*

If whilſt we attempt to infer the *Truth of the Reſurrection of Chriſt*, we run counter to any truly rational and allowed Principles; if the Arguments we make uſe of, when thoroughly ſifted and traced, are found to terminate in that which the ſober Senſe of Mankind muſt condemn, as ſophiſtical, falſe, or impertinent; and this, not as the Effect of bare Inadvertency or Miſmanagement (becauſe a very good Argument may poſſibly be handled badly, and yet ought not for that Reaſon, to loſe any thing of its Credit) but of the very Conſtitution

and

ment itſelf. And if this be the Reſult of all, and every one of thoſe Arguments, which can be produced in Defence of this Doctrine, or in order to prove the certain Truth of it: *Then the Controverſy is at an end, and the* Chriſtian *muſt give up the Cauſe.* Becauſe Truth can never poſſibly run Men into any real Abſurdities in the Defence of it; nor can God oblige us to receive any Point of Doctrine, to the utter overthrowing that Reaſon he has given us, to guide ourſelves by; tho' he may oblige us to receive that, which our Reaſon cannot ſolve all the Difficulties of.

If on the other Side, thoſe who oppoſe this Doctrine, can neither do that, nor defend themſelves, without being obliged to ſtand by ſuch Concluſions, as the common Senſe of Mankind would upon a fair Hearing condemn as irrational; if they are neceſſitated to have recourſe to Principles that are either manifeſtly falſe and contradictory, or doubtful and precarious, in order to ſolve the Difficulties that are propoſed to them; or can no ways guard themſelves againſt ſuch Difficulties, but by artful Evaſions and Excurſions from the matter in hand: In a word, if in the natural Courſe of the Argument, they are forced upon Things that tend to darken or blunder the Cauſe, and do not terminate in a direct and poſitive Anſwer to what is urged upon them: In this Caſe it will be very evident, *That Truth cannot be on their Side, and that therefore, to act as they ought to do, they ſhould, without any more ado, yield the great Point in Diſpute.*

What therefore remains to be done, is to make this Compariſon between their Argumentation and ours. It is certain, they muſt be as oppoſite one to another, as the Opinions they are produced in Favour of: and therefore cannot be ſound and true on both ſides. The *Paralogiſm*, the *Abſurdity*, or whatever it be, muſt be found either with them or with us; and conſequently, where it lies, will infallibly point out who is in the right, and who in the wrong.

And

And tho' a *Chriſtian* may poſſibly have other arguments, tending, in conjunction with thoſe which are purely rational, to aſſure him of the verity of the *Chriſtian Faith* and *Doctrine*; yet, theſe being no more than mere *Fancy* and *Enthuſiaſm*, in the Opinions of the *Gentlemen*, there are not to be ſo much as mentioned in this place. It is to *Reaſon* they appeal; and therefore, to plain downright reaſon we muſt go.

SECT. III.

THAT we may proceed the more methodically, and not diſpute about things, wherein we are on both ſides agreed; it will be requiſite to take notice of ſome points, relating to the perſon and hiſtory of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which the *Deiſts*, together with the greateſt part of mankind beſides, do as freely ſubſcribe to the truth of, as the *Chriſtians* themſelves.

And, *Firſt*, I believe it will be allowed without much difficulty, *that there was ſuch a perſon as* Jeſus Chriſt, *who was born at* Bethlehem *in* Judea, *in the reign of* Auguſtus Cæſar, *and crucifyed at* Jeruſalem *in the reign of* Tiberius; Pontius Pilate *being then the Roman Governour.*

This is what moſt ſects and parties of men, who have ever heard of *Chriſtianity*, do unanimouſly agree in. The *Mahometans* indeed differ from all the reſt, as to the latter part of the propoſition: For out of an exceſs of reſpect to *Jeſus Chriſt*, they will by no means allow of his infamous Crucifixion and Death; but affirm, *That he was taken up into* * *Heaven, and ſome Image of him only left upon the Croſs in his room, by which the* Jews, *as well as his own* Followers, *who pretended to be witneſſes of the fact, were impoſed upon, and made to believe that he ſuffered when in reality he did not.* But we ſhall not need to be much ſollicitous about their teſtimony in this matter, ſince they deny

* Adrian. Relandi de Relig. Mahomed. *Lib.* 1. *Pag.* 35. Edit. Ultrajec.

it, upon ſo honourable an account, and are ſo clear and expreſs in all the reſt, relating to the Life and Character of our *Saviour*; and eſpecially, ſince there are ſuch abundant Conceſſions made of it, by Men of all other Perſuaſions, and particularly by thoſe, with whom we are principally concerned.

For the *Deiſts* have proved to ſome purpoſe, *That they believe all that we have here ſaid of* Jeſus Chriſt.

And the *Jews* know it to be true, and are as free to own it as the former.

The reproachful name of תלוי, or the Perſon who was hanged, which they ſo commonly beſtow on him, as alſo that of תלוי עוכרי, the ſervants of him who was hanged, which they give the *Chriſtians*, ſhew ſufficiently, if there were no more, *That they are no Unbelievers in this Point.* But they have other Proofs of it amongſt themſelves which we hope there will be a time for their ſo ſeriouſly conſidering, *That they ſhall come to talk of him whom they crucify'd in a more reſpectful manner, and inſtead of* תלוי *by way of Reproach ſhall call him* משיח *in profound Honour and Devotion.*

The Teſtimony of their fam'd Countryman † *Joſephus* concerning our Saviour, is well known to all the learned World; who are ſenſible alſo, how plain and expreſs it is, not only to the Life, Miracles and Crucifixion of *Jeſus Chriſt*, but his *Reſurrection* alſo and the fulfilling of Prophecies in him, and the wonderful Converſion both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* to the Faith of his Goſpel. I am aware how much the Genuineneſs of his Paſſage is diſputed by ſome, as alſo how vigorouſly it is defended by others. And tho' I do not know, but that on one ſide there may be thoſe who perhaps are over-fond and zealous for having it genuine; yet I doubt too, there are others who are afraid leſt it ſhould be ſo. As for my own part, I freely own I believe it to be as much *Joſephus*'s as any thing in all the *Book of Antiqui-*

† Antiq. Judaic. *lib.* 18. *cap.* 4. *pag.* 621. Edit. Genev. 1635.

ties:

ties: And becauſe I would not willingly be rank'd amongſt the People that are irrationally fond of it, and will have it genuine, right or wrong, without inquiring into the Matter; I ſhall therefore give my Reaſons, why I believe it is not a Forgery.

SECT. IV.

FIRST of all; *This Teſtimony is recorded and taken notice of*, as *Joſephus*'s, *by many old* Writers *of unqueſtionable credit*. To begin with one who was early enough; *Euſebius* gives it at large in his * *Demonſtr. Evangel.* Lib. 3. Pag. 124. *Edit. Pariſ.* 1628. He likewiſe repeats the ſame, *Hiſtor. Eccleſiaſt.* Lib. 1. Cap. 11. Pag. 30. *Edit. Pariſ.* 1659. [in vita Tiberii.]

We have the ſame Teſtimony recorded and quoted by *Nicephorus Calliſtus*, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* Lib. 1. Cap. 39. Pag. 84. & 85. *Edit. Pariſ.* 1574. And *Sozomen* introduces it with a particular Elogy of *Joſephus* himſelf, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* Lib. 1. Cap. Pag. 399. *Edit. Par.* 1668. Καὶ ἰώσηπος ὁ μαθὼν ὁ ἱερεὺς, ἀνὴρ περὶ τὰ ἰουδαίους καὶ ῥωμαίους ἐπιδοξότατος γενόμενος, ἀξιόχρεως ἂν εἴη μάρτυς τῆς περὶ Χριστὸ ἀληθείας ——— And then he goes on and repeats exactly to the ſame purpoſe what we find in *Euſebius* and *Calliſtus*, and the *Joſephus* we have at preſent. *Suidas* alſo ſets down the very ſame, in the word Ἰώσηπος, with this particular Remark, that *Joſephus* gives it in the 18th *Book of his Antiquities* [*Edit. Cantab.* 1705.] And

* Γίνεται δὲ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἢ χρόνον Ἰησοῦς ζοφὸς ἀνὴρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή. Ἦν γὰρ παράδοξων ἔργων ποιητὴς, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τ' ἀληθῆ δεχομένων. Καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ Ἑλληνικὰ ἐπηγάγετο. Ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. Καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαυσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες. Ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τοῦ θείου προφήτου ταῦτα τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσιον. Ὅθεν εἰσέτι νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦδε τὴν Χριστιανῶν οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.

this agrees perfectly with the account given by St. *Jerom*, *De Scriptor. Eccleſiaſt.* where he refers us to *Joſephus* for the forementioned account of our Saviour.

Laſtly, We find it repeated by *Iſidorus Peluſiota* to the ſame purpoſe, as in all the reſt, *Lib.* 4. *Epiſt.* 225. *Pag.* 549. *Edit. Pariſ.* 1638. Theſe are thoſe which I have taken notice of; tho' I know there are more reckoned up who attribute this Teſtimony to *Joſephus*, and have put it out of all doubt *that they firmly believed it to be his.*

On the other hand it is objected, that this paſſage is not taken notice of at all by thoſe antient defenders of the *Chriſtian Cauſe*, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, &c. who one would think, ſhould not have failed, upon ſome occaſion or other, to have put the adverſaries they dealt with, which were of all ſorts, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*, in mind of ſo remarkable a Teſtimony as this, and that from ſo remarkable an author too, and one who was not a *Chriſtian*. So that here is poſitive Teſtimony alledged on one ſide: And the want or defect of it on the other. And tho' it be true that the want of Teſtimony from ſome perſons, in ſome particular circumſtances, may be looked upon as a pretty ſtrong preſumption that a thing was not ſo as it is reported to be; yet all things being well conſidered, on both ſides, in this caſe; I think it is plain, *that this defect is not in reaſon to be eſteemed equivalent to all the poſitive Teſtimony, which is, and may be produced; eſpecially, ſince it may be ſhewn upon ſome good grounds, that this paſſage of* Joſephus *may be genuine, and yet that thoſe* Chriſtian *writers beforementioned, ſhould not take notice of it neither.* In a word, if this, teſtimony be a forgery foiſted in by any *Chriſtian* hand, all that we can ſay is, *That ſuch practices are infinitely unworthy of the* Chriſtian *Name and hateful to the Divine and Holy author of it, who has condemned all manner of fraud and deceit by the Laws of this Religion, and will puniſh it by whomſoever committed, and upon what pretence ſoever*

ever, without ſincere repentance. But if it were really penned by *Joſephus* himſelf, and extant in the firſt copies of his hiſtory; yet for all that, there is a fair account to be given of the *ſilence of the forementioned* Chriſtian *Fathers concerning it.*

If you ask *how?* I anſwer; from the abuſe of the copies they chanced to make uſe of, in which this famous Teſtimony was very probably wanting. And if you ask ſtill, *How it ſhould come about that ſuch a paſſage ſhould be wanting in thoſe copies?* I anſwer, that in all likelihood it was raiſed out of as many copies by the *Jews*, or thoſe in confederacy with them, as they could get fair opportunities to debauch: By the *Jews*, I ſay, from whoſe known malice and hatred to *Chriſtianity*, nothing leſs than ſo vile a practice was to be expected. For *Joſephus* lived in the very times of the Apoſtles themſelves, when the ſtory of *Chriſt Jeſus* and his mighty works was freſh in the world. And, beſides being an author of ſo great a reputation, he was one of their own country and religion too.

Now let any Man but think with himſelf, under what notion theſe people muſt be repreſented to the world, when one of their Countrymen ſhould come and give ſuch a Character of a Perſon, whom they had treated with the utmoſt indignity, and put to death as a vile Malefactor. Would it not ſet them out as a moſt forlorn and execrable Generation of Men, and juſtify all that our Saviour had ſaid of them before, in the ſeveral ſharp Rebukes he had given them? How could it be imagined that they would ever ſuffer the ſeal of ſuch an author as this, to be ſet to the truth of *Chriſtianity*, and to go along with it thro' the world; if pains and watching, if falſhood and bribery; in ſhort, if any ſort of artifice poſſible to be made uſe of, could avail to the taking of it away? There is no doubt to be made therefore, but they did the utmoſt that their Power and Policy could effect. And as they could not compaſs the raiſing this Teſtimony out of all the copies diſperſed in the world; ſo they took care to do it in thoſe,

which they and their Emiſſaries had the opportunity of managing. For what they could not do by themſelves openly, and as *Jews*, they might accompliſh by other hands, leſs ſuſpected and fitter to do that work, than theirs. Nor have there ever been wanting amongſt mankind, ſome ſo degenerate, as for worldly Conſiderations, to yield to be employed in ſuch baſe Work.

Again, This ought to be conſidered too, *That it is a far eaſier way of abuſing an Author, to rob him of ſomething he has ſaid, than it is to foiſt any thing into him, and make that paſs for his which he never did ſay.* For beſides the Care incumbent on ſuch Impoſtors to obſerve exactly the Laws of Tranſition and Connexion, in order to make their Forgeries all of a Piece with the Author's Text, that they may look neat and handſomely, and not diſcover the fraud by the Botch: Beſides this, they muſt have ſtudied the Author ſo well, as to be perfect maſters of his ſtile and diction, and be able to expreſs themſelves with that ſort of air, and in that mode which is peculiar to the author they pretend to counterfeit. Which I look upon to be a difficulty ſuperable but by very few; I mean ſo as not to leave the cheat diſcoverable, by ſome Criterions or other afterwards. However, it is apparent, *That this would be a far more difficult and troubleſome piece of knavery, than barely to omit or leave a ſentence out of a ſet of Copies, and by that means repreſent the author to ſuch Perſons as had the fortune to light on them, as never having written any ſuch thing at all.* In ſhort, if upon Examination it ſhould appear, *That there is the very Spirit of* Joſephus's *Stile and Diction in this famous Teſtimony concerning our Saviour; then I hope the genuineneſs of it will be out of diſpute with all conſidering perſons, whatever plauſible objections have been, or ever may be urged againſt it.*

SECT. V.

BUT I muſt ſay farther, it is the more credible, *That this noted Teſtimony concerning* Jeſus Chriſt *may have been*

been raſed out of ſome copies by ſome wicked hands; becauſe there are plain Indications of ſuch foul practices in other caſes relating to the ſame author.

For it is notorious that *Joſephus* is actually quoted and referred to for paſſages which do not now appear in him. Now it is never to be imagined that men who had the leaſt ſenſe of honour and reputation, if they had no regard to common Honeſty and Truth, or to the cauſe they maintained, which was ſo much diſputed and deſpiſed in the world; would ever have quoted a celebrated author, in the face of all mankind, and in the midſt of foes as well as friends, and thoſe very acute and learned ones too; I ſay, that they would never have appealed to ſuch a perſon, as ſaying ſuch and ſuch things, if thoſe things had not been actually in the copies they made uſe of, and been univerſally received as genuine in their days. For as ſuch an egregious piece of knavery could not poſſibly eſcape being diſcovered by ſome one or other of the contrary ſide; ſo the diſcovery of it muſt have fixed ſuch a blot of ſcandal and reproach on thoſe perſons, as no time could ever have wiped off, but would have been remembred by all poſterity with indignation and contempt.

What I ſhall mention to this purpoſe, in the firſt place, in that Teſtimony of *Joſephus*, concerning *James* the brother of *Chriſt*. This we have in *Euſebius*, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* Lib. 2. Cap. 23. Pag. 65. And he does not only quote *Joſephus* for it, but tells us expreſsly his very words.

For having ſhewn, in words of his own, how juſt and righteous a man *James* was, and that the ſober and more conſiderate men among the *Jews* believed the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* to be a puniſhment inflicted on them for murdering of him; he then brings in this famous author ſaying the very ſame thing in theſe words. Ταῦτα δὲ συμβέβηκεν Ἰουδαίοις, κατ' ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ἀπεκτόνησαν γὰρ αὐτὸν ὄντα, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀπέκτειναν.

But *Origen*, a more antient writer, gives the very ſame account of the matter, for which he refers to *Joſephus*, *Antiq. Lib.* 18. And this he does, *Contr. Celſ. Lib.* 1. *Pag.* 35. And St. *Jerom*, *De Script. Eccleſiaſt.* refers to the ſame author and book of him for the paſſage quoted by the other two.

Now I think all people are agreed, *That no ſuch paſſage as this is to be found in* Joſephus *now a-days.* It is true indeed, he does not paſs over in ſilence the death of a perſon ſo remarkable for piety and virtue, as St. *James* was. For he tells us, *Antiq. Lib.* 20. *Pag.* 698. *That this fact was highly diſpleaſing to all the juſt and good people; and that application was made to the king, to lay his commands on the High Prieſt* Ananus, *that no ſuch things might be done for the future.* But there is no ſign of any ſuch account, as we have out of *Origen* and *Euſebius*; which however they came by, I think it is plain to any man, *that they did not, nor could invent it.*

SECT. VI.

I Know it is ſaid, *That they made uſe of corrupt and vitiated copies of* Joſephus.

But this is *gratis dictum*, and they have nothing that I would ever ſee, like proof, to ſupport it. And it is plain, they eſpouſe the moſt improbable and unnatural *Hypotheſis* of the two by far; for it is eaſier to abuſe an author by taking from him, than by adding to him. However, I think it is intolerably precarious, and in ſhort downright triffling to ſuppoſe, as ſome do, that *Origen* in mentioning this paſſage, truſted his memory too far, and quoted what he had never at all read in *Joſephus*. For at this rate, what author is to be depended upon, if ſuch ſuppoſitions as theſe are to take place, without plain and particular proof of ſuch a degree of heedleſneſs in a man that writes? And I would fain know, what privilege theſe *Moderns*, who talk

talk after this manner, have to escape this Distemper of dreaming, and fancying they read what they do not read, any more than the Ancients? It is true, there are strange things laid to the charge of the old *Christian Writers*: for *heathen Philosophers and Historians* are easily pardoned for whatever they do amiss; nay, their very Blunders are made Beauties, and serve to discover something very rare and excellent. But let those *Writers* be what they will, I make no doubt, but there are *modern Authors*, who have vastly out-done them in all Points of *Whimsey*, *Fanaticism*, and *Enthusiasm*, or whatever else can be called vain and extravagant.

After all is said, I shall mention one more, who, like *Origen*, trusted his Memory too far, with respect to this very Passage; and that is *Suidas*. He, in Ἰώσηπος, tells us, that *Josephus*, in the 18th Book of his *Antiq.* asserts, *That that terrible Judgment, the destruction of* Jerusalem, *was brought upon the* Jews *for the Murder of St.* James.

And these Persons all of them, seem to me to talk of the Matter, not as if they had borrowed the Quotation one from another; but as if they were sure, their Author had said those things they quoted from him: *Eusebius* especially, who speaks with an Assurance, as if his Author was then lying by him: ὁ γοῦν Ἰώσηπος οὐκ ἀπώκνησε καὶ τοῦτ' ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι, δι' ὧν φησι λέξεων, in Loc. citat.

SECT. VII.

THERE are other Passages also, for which *Josephus* is quoted by some of those that we have mention'd; but do not appear in him at present. Such as that of St. *John Baptist*, whom *Josephus* is said, expressly to have confessed to have been a Prophet; and that in a Book so often mentioned, *Antiq. Lib.* 18. This is particularly recorded by St. *Jerom*, *De Script. Ecclesiast.* Nor can I forbear observing, what the same Author says too there, tho' it be not

not with respect to *John Baptist*, but to *Jesus Christ*. He tells us, that *Josephus* himself owns, *That* Christ *was slain by the* Jews *for the Multitude of his Miracles*. And *Suidas*, in Ἰώαννης, affirms both the same things, *viz.* That *concerning* John Baptist, and that *concerning the Occasion of our Saviour's Death*; and refers to the same Place for them.

It is true indeed, *Josephus* says not a few things of *John Baptist*. He tells us, (pag. 626.) *That the* Jews *believed* Herod *was overcome by* Aretas *King of the* Arabians *for taking away the Life of that Person: That he was a good Man, and one who stirred up the* Jews *to the study of Piety and Justice*, &c. But all this is nothing to his being called a *Prophet*; which is what the foremention'd Authors declare *Josephus* expressly confesses.

We have another Example of this also from *Suidas*, relating to *Jesus Christ* himself. This Author, in Ἰησοῦς, tells us by way of Quotation from *Josephus*, *That* Jesus *sacrificed with the Priests in the Temple*. Εὑρεῖν ἔν Ἰώσηπον τὴν συγγραφὴν τῆς ἁλώσεως Ἱεροσολύμων, ἣ μνήμην πολλὴν ἐυσεβοῦς ὁ Παμφίλου ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησιαστικῇ αὐτῆς Ἱστορίᾳ ποιῆται, φανερῶς λέγοντα ἐν τοῖς τῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας αὐτῆς ὑπομνήμασιν, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ μιᾶς τῶν ἱερῶν ἡγιάζετο. What put *Suidas* upon searching *Josephus* to find whether it were true that he had thus asserted, *That our Saviour sacrificed with the Priests in the Temple*; this I say may be seen in the forementioned Place. The Story is remarkable, as well for the very plain and particular manner in which it is told, as for the subject Matter of it. However, being a very long one, and not directly to my purpose, I shall forbear inserting it here; tho' I think it well worth every curious Man's reading.

And thus much may suffice as to this celebrated Testimony of *Josephus*. My Business was to relate matter of Fact, as I have found it. Every Man may draw what Conclusions from thence he thinks fit. At the same time, I shall take the liberty to offer what appears reasonable to me in this matter; which others may either assent

aſſent to, or diſſent from, according as they find juſt cauſe.

Firſt, *There are fewer Difficulties in ſuppoſing this Teſtimony to have been, ſome time or other, ſtruck out of ſome Copies by the* Jews; *than in ſuppoſing that it was ever deceitfully foiſted into any, by the* Chriſtians.

Secondly, That it is, at leaſt, as eaſy to anſwer that Queſtion, which ſome ſeem to lay ſo much ſtreſs upon, *viz. Why ſhould thoſe Copies of* Joſephus, *which* Origen, &c. *made uſe of, want the Teſtimony concerning* Chriſt, *and have that of* James; *when our Copies want that of* James, *and have that concerning* Jeſus Chriſt? as it is to anſwer the following Queſtion: ——

Why ſhould ſo many credible *Writers*, who do not appear to have taken the thing upon Truſt from one another, and ſome of whom muſt needs have expoſed the Cauſe they maintained, to the laſt degree of Inſult and Contempt, by aſſerting a thing which all mankind could have confuted them in: Why I ſay they ſhould all agree in appealing to an Author, and that in the moſt particular manner that can be, for ſuch or ſuch a Paſſage; if they had not really found thoſe Words in him, which they recited?

SECT. VIII.

TO the foremention'd Teſtimonies concerning *Jeſus Chriſt*, we may add thoſe of ſome of the *Pagan* Writers themſelves.

† *Suetonius* takes notice of him, under a Name better known to the *Latins* and *Greeks* than *Chriſtus* was; and therefore inſtead of that, we find him called in this Author's Hiſtory by the Name of *Chreſtus*.

The Account we have from * *Tacitus* is much more expreſs and particular; for he mentions the Death of

† Sueton. in Claudio.
* Tacit. Ann. Lib. 15.

Chriſt,

Christ, as also the Emperor *Tiberius*, and the Governour *Pontius Pilate*, under whom he suffered.

† *Pliny*, who takes no notice of these things, shews however, *what divine Honours we paid to* Jesus Christ *by the* Christians in his days; whose Manners he makes to be strictly regular and inoffensive; their worst Fault, being only an invincible Obstinacy in adhering to their Religion.

But, leaving those which are more vulgarly quoted upon this Occasion, we find the Fact of the Crucifixion of *Jesus Christ*, expressly taken notice of by * *Lucian*, who jears both him and the *Christians* his Worshippers on that account: ἢ δὲ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκεῖνον σοφιστὴν, &c. This Man seemed to reckon it an unaccountable piece of Nonsense and Stupidity, that they should have no regard to such a pompous train of Gods and Goddesses as he and his *Geeeks*, a wise and learned People, adored; but instead of that, should turn all their Devotion to a Person who was distinguish'd from the rest of Mankind, by an infamous and accursed death.

Julian, who had reason to know more of *Christ* and *Christianity* than *Lucian* did, goes much beyond him in his Accounts of this matter. Instead of ridiculing *Christ*'s Death and Passion, he endeavours to lessen the reputation of his Life and Miracles. † But how does he do this? Why by telling the world, *That* Jesus Christ *did nothing worthy of Note all the while he was here upon Earth, after all the noise that was made about him, except a Man will reckon it a great Work to open the Eyes of the Blind,*

† Plin. lib. 10. Epist. 97. ad Trajan.

* Lucian de Morte Peregrini, *pag.* 996. Edit. Par 1615. *Speaking of the* Christians——— Θεοὺς μὲν τοὺς Ἑλληνικοὺς ἀπαρνέσωνται, τὸν δὲ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκεῖνον Σοφιστὴν αὐτῶν προσκυνῶσι, καὶ κατὰ τοὺς ἐκείνου νόμους βιῶσι.

† Ἐργασάμενος ταρ' ὃν ἔζη χρόνον, ἔργον οὐδὲν ἀκοῆς ἄξιον, εἰ μή τις οἴεται τοὺς κυλλοὺς καὶ τυφλοὺς ἰάσασθαι, καὶ δαιμοιῶντας ἐφορκίζειν ἐν Βηθσαϊδᾷ καὶ ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ταῖς κωμαῖς, τῶν μαγίστων ἔργων εἶναι. Cyril. Alexandr. contra Julian. *lib.* 6. *pag.* 191. Edit. Par. 1638.

to

to reſtore Limbs to the Lame, and deliver Perſons poſſeſſed from the Power and Enchantments of Devils.

Theſe were but trifling things; and *Jeſus Chriſt* did nothing worth talking of. But how came it about that *Julian* ſet ſo light by theſe Works of our Saviour, which the greateſt part of mankind would undoubtedly call mighty and wonderful? Why, becauſe he pretended, at leaſt, to believe that ſome of his Heathen *Virtuoſo's* could do as ſtrange Feats as theſe: and, if occaſion were, beſtow a pair of Eyes or Legs upon them that wanted them?

So that *Chriſt* did nothing but what could be matched by ſome of them, and therefore deſerved no more notice than what they did. A pretty account! But, how did *Julian* come to be aſſured of the Truth of theſe Facts? for it is notoriouſly plain, *that he takes them all for granted.* There can be no other reply made than this, *That the Evidence was ſuch as extorted that confeſſion from him.* If ſo, it is certain, *That there was the ſame Evidence for other Facts as for theſe.* The ſame Proof that aſſured *Julian* it muſt needs be true, *That* Chriſt *cured the Poſſeſſed, Blind* and *Lame*; would alſo ſatisfy him, *That he raiſed the dead to life, and fed ſeveral thouſands with what would not have been a competent Allowance for ſo many Scores.* Nay ſome of thoſe moſt miraculous Actions of our Saviour, being alſo the moſt open and publick ones; have a far more convincing Evidence to go along with them, than many others of leſs Fame.

But the Buſineſs lay here: Theſe Problems *of raiſing the Dead*, &c. were infinitely too ſublime for any of the Emperor's juggling Philoſophers, even to pretend to meddle with. For there was no room for *Legerdemain and Trick* in ſuch Caſes as theſe, ſince the World muſt preſently diſcover it; and all Natural Arts and Skil could ſignify nothing to the Production of Effects of ſo grand a nature. So that the only way was, never to make any mention at all of theſe Works of *Chriſt Jeſus*, but

paſs

paſs them by in ſilence. Whereas thoſe which human art could ſhew ſome ſort of reſemblances of, ſuch as making the Blind ſee, and the Lame walk, *&c.* theſe, *that crafty Adverſary of Chriſtianity*, ſince he muſt own ſomething, *thought it adviſable enough to take notice of.* For at the ſame time, that he paid a little kind of Compliment to manifeſt Truth; he took care to own no more than what he could have the Advantage of comparing to ſome effects of curious Knowledge and Skill abroad in the Heathen World. No wonder then, he gives ſo ſlight an Account of the Miracles of *Chriſt Jeſus.* Indeed, all the ſmarter Enemies of *Chriſtianity* were well aware of the Neceſſity there was to make thoſe Miracles appear as little as poſſible. And one way to do that, was to make them cheap and vulgar, by pretending many other Perſons, who could or did do the ſame things.

And therefore it was, *That* Philoſtratus *and* Hierocles, *not being able otherwiſe to eclipſe* the *Glory of* Chriſt's *Miracles ſet up* Apollonius Tyanæus *againſt him.* And we know the *Jews* were arrived to that pitch of Extravagancy, as to ſay, *That he did all his wonderful Works by virtue of the* Tetragrammaton. In ſhort, whatever ſurprizing things were reported to be done by any of the *Heathen Sages*; were they but fairly to be compared with the ſame ſort of Operations done by *Jeſus Chriſt:* I make no queſtion but it would appear to every one of common Senſe and Judgment, *That at the ſame time that they acted the Parts of good Phyſicians or Chirurgeons; he behaved himſelf as the Lord of Nature, and acted like one, who not only underſtood her, but could command and diſpoſe of all her Motions at Pleaſure.* And thus much for *Julian's* Conceſſions.

But above all the reſt, *Celſus* makes the largeſt and moſt particular Conceſſions about *Jeſus Chriſt:* as confeſſing the Truth of his *Nativity*, *his Journey into* Egypt, *his paſſing from place to place with his Diſciples, the Fact of his Miracles, his being betrayed*, and laſtly, *his Death*

Death and Paſſion. It is true, theſe Conceſſions are all made in order either to pure Scoff and Ridicule, or to vain and impertinent Jangling. However, made they were, and the things were ſo evident that they could not be denied. But as for *Celſus*'s railing or jeſting with any of them, that is little to the preſent purpoſe; and his Chaſtizer *Origen*, has ſufficiently expoſed him upon all thoſe Accounts; tho' not in his own way, but that of plain Reaſon and Argument.

I ſhall not need to refer to particular Places where theſe things are to be found, they being obvious to every one who has that Author in his Hands.

SECT. IX.

Secondly, BEſides theſe particulars, concerning the Life and Paſſion of *Jeſus Chriſt*; I believe it will be granted likewiſe without much difficulty, *That quickly after the Death of* Chriſt, *there was a Party of Men in that ſame Country of* Judæa *who pretended he was riſen again; which thing they teſtified with the utmoſt Aſſurance, and in the moſt publick manner to all ſorts of Perſons wherever they came, even to the* Jews *themſelves, the profeſſed, and moſt inveterate Enemies of this* Jeſus *and his Followers.* I am not here offering any thing to prove the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* to be true, or to juſtify theſe Men in the Report they made thereof; but only relate a thing as a bare point of Hiſtory, which, I think, will not be deny'd, *viz. That there were ſuch People in thoſe days who did ſpread abroad this ſtrange Doctrine in the World; That that very Perſon who was crucify'd before the Eyes of ſo vaſt a Croud of People at* Jeruſalem, *did a few days after riſe again, and converſe in the World for ſome time, amongſt thoſe who had perfectly well known him before.*

SECT.

SECT. X.

NOW this account we have from those *Primitive Writers* of the *Christian* Affairs, whom the *Christians* themselves commonly call by the Name of *Evangelists* and *Apostles*. It is true, these Persons are looked upon by those who receive the *Christian* Faith, as Men who were divinely inspired, and their Writings as from God, and published to the World by his Authority. However, I suppose nothing of all that at present; but appeal to them barely as the Works of some antient Historians, telling upon their own Knowledge, that such and such things concerning *Christ Jesus* were very positively asserted, and no less firmly believed by vast multitudes of People in their days. All that I have therefore to be satisfy'd in, is *whether these Writings be really theirs or no?* Whether the Books we attribute to them, and which we find to bear their Names, contain a sincere and genuine Account of what they first declared to the World concerning these great Matters? If we can persuade ourselves upon sure and undoubted Principles, that it is so; then we may make some very good use of the Relations they give us, in the after Process of the Argument. But if the World be merely imposed upon with spurious and suppositious, or corrupt and adulterated Pieces, instead of the true and native Compositions of these original *Christian Writers*, from whence we might be informed what their genuine Sentiments were; then they are of no significancy at all in the present Enquiry, but must be even laid by and neglected, as other false and illegitimate Pieces use to be, when known and discovered to be such.

SECT. XI.

NOW in order to the attaining a just and reasonable satisfaction in this Point, let us see the Impossibilities

ſibilities that attend the contrary *Hypotheſis*, and at once give a fair demonſtration of the truth of our PROP. V. Part II.

Firſt, The firſt teachers of the *Chriſtian* Faith, who would not fail of uſing the moſt effectual means for the propagating and perpetuating a Doctrine which they ſo zealouſly eſpouſed themſelves, whether becauſe *they knew it to be from God*, or for any other reaſon, I do not here inquire, would not upon that ſcore neglect ſo direct and neceſſary a method for obtaining their end; as that of *committing their Doctrines to writing*, muſt in common reaſon be allowed to be.

This indeed, is what may be rationally expected from the policy and care of the firſt founders of any *Sect*; as being a ſtep ſo fundamental in order to the preſervation and progreſs thereof, that without it, things being left to reſt upon the precarious bottom of memory, tradition, fancy and humour, in repreſenting thoſe things which were firſt delivered, nothing could follow but ſuch jangling and confuſion, as would ſoon terminate in the utter ruin and diſſipation of that *Sect*. I need not ſay that all the *Sects* we know of, that have made any figure in the world, have not failed to take this courſe. And there are ſuch proofs to evince, *That the firſt founders of* Chriſtianity, *did in fact proceed after this manner*; that if they may be denied, a man may as rationally deny that there was ever ſuch a perſon as *Chriſt Jeſus* in the world; and ſo put a quick end to all the controverſy about his *Reſurrection*.

SECT. XII.

Secondly, WHILE *the Apoſtles themſelves were living*, it was impoſſible that any thing ſhould be put upon the world as their Doctrine, which was contrary to it; or ſhould be received as their writing, which was not ſo.

For, ſince innovations of this kind could not be carried on, without being detected and found out by them, who were ſo intent upon ſpreading the Goſpel, as to travel far and wide thro' the world, and take cognizance themſelves of the ſtate of *Chriſtianity* in every place where they came; it is plain, *That no upſtarts or counterfeits could ever perfect their juggling deſigns, while theſe firſt teachers of the Goſpel lived to have an eye upon them, and were ready to expoſe the fraud.* For, whatever cheat of this kind, any falſe and perfidious hand might poſſibly have attempted; yet the firſt founders of the *Chriſtian* ſect, who muſt be allowed to be the beſt judges of their own Doctrines and Opinions, would, I hope, be heard by the reſt of mankind, before all other pretenders whatſoever. Their aſſertions in ſuch a caſe would be deciſive; and every body would take it for granted, *That thoſe tenets were none of theirs, which they ſhould ſolemnly diſclaim, and openly proteſt againſt, in the face of all the world, from whence ſuch multitudes of witneſſes might be called out to atteſt the Doctrines they had both preached and written.* It is true indeed, the authors of a *Sect* may outlive the credit and reputation of their own *Sect.* Their Doctrines may be ſuppreſſed by force, or overturned by ſuperior argument, while the preachers themſelves are in being. But that others, which are either quite contrary, or which they never thought any thing of, ſhould be coined and foiſted into the room of them, and paſs univerſally for the genuine inſtitutes of ſuch and ſuch men, while they themſelves are alive, and have it in their power to detect the forgery; is a thing ſo abſurd and impoſſible, that a man may well be thought to have quite loſt his taſte, that does not reliſh it as ſuch.

SECT. XIII.

Thirdly, THE *ſame is to be ſaid of that ſpace of Time, during which, the* Autography *or* Original Manu-

Manuſcripts *of the* Apoſtles *and* Evangeliſts *were preſerved in the* Chriſtian Church.

For while theſe were at hand to be ſearched and conſulted, the caſe would be the ſame, as if the very authors themſelves had been alive, to give their own determinations in perſon. How long time after *Chriſt*, the Church had theſe venerable writings in poſſeſſion, is not very material to the preſent argument. I am only concerned to ſhew, that the attempts of *Impoſtors* muſt needs have been vain and fruitleſs, while the *Autographa* themſelves were extant; whether it were a greater, or a leſs ſpace of time that they were ſo. However, it is obſervable, that * *Tertullian* intimates, as if they were, ſome of them at leaſt, preſerved till the age wherein he lived and to be ſeen at that time: Which is far from being incredible, if we conſider the prodigious Zeal and Veneration of the *Chriſtians* in thoſe days, for whatever they eſteemed Divine and Sacred; as alſo, that this writer flouriſhed at the latter end of the ſecond, or the very beginning of the third *Century*.

Beſides, I believe the learned world can furniſh ſome examples of this kind, and ſhew, by unanſwerable proofs, that the very hand-writings of ſome authors, have been preſerv'd, I will not ſay, only for as long, but even, for a longer time, than what we are now ſpeaking of, amounts to.

SECT. XIV.

Fourthly NO *one particular* Party *or* Sect *of* Chriſtians, *or pretended* Chriſtians, *could ever poſſibly have managed matters ſo, as to impoſe on the reſt of the world by any grand forgery, or adulteration of the writings of the* New Teſtament.

* Age jam, qui voles Curioſitatem melius exercere in negotio ſalutis tuæ, percurre Eccleſias Apoſtolicas, apud quas ipſæ adhuc Cathedræ Apoſtolorum ſuis Locis præſident, apud quas ipſæ Authenticæ Literæ eorum recitantur. *De preſcript. adverſus Hæreticos.*

For whatever *Sect* ſhould have attempted ſuch a thing, could never have made any progreſs in it; but all the other *Sects* and *Perſuaſions* of *Chriſtians*, which were contrary to them, muſt have been conſcious of the baſe deſign. And if a *Zeal* and *Veneration* for theſe writings, as divinely inſpired, had not been ſufficient to prevail with ſome of them, to beſtir themſelves, and proclaim ſo notorious an *impoſture* to the world; yet the *enmity* and *quarrels* ariſing from contrariety of Intereſts and Opinions, would have been ſuch a guard upon theſe books, as the utmoſt care and policy of any ill deſigning party, would never have been able to elude. Where men indeed are all of a mind, and their ſchemes on all ſides perfectly agree; there being no room for jealouſy and ſuſpicion, there is likewiſe no reaſon for their having an eye upon one another. But where they run out into *Parties* and *Factions*, and *diſputes ariſe* high betwixt them about the ſenſe and meaning of the Doctrines they have received; each party juſtifying their own Opinions from the copies they have amongſt them; in this caſe, every ſide will be ſure to obſerve their *Antagoniſts*, and ſee that they have juſtice done them in all the appeals made to that book, by whoſe authority they all agree to have the matters in debate amongſt them decided. So that if thoſe on one ſide ſhould have recourſe to any unfair artifices, either in order to the recommending their own Opinions to the belief of men, or elſe for the ſake of victory over their adverſaries; the others who would never bear ſuch foul play, to be ſure would not keep their counſel, but paint them out in their proper colours of knavery and deceit to all mankind. For the rage about Opinions, eſpecially if thought to be of great conſequence, is like that of the *Sea*; and a *Tide* may as ſoon be ſtopped as revenge in ſuch caſes, if there be but opportunity to exert it. In a word, tho' Diviſions and Animoſities are in themſelves contrary to the nature, deſign, and precepts of the Chriſtian Religion; yet there

there is no doubt, but that Divine Providence, which often brings the greateſt good out of evil, has made ſignal uſe, even of theſe contentions, in order to its ſecurity. For by this means, one party has been a ſure guard upon another, and all of them animated to look ſo ſharply about them, that nothing of dangerous conſequence to the common intereſts of Chriſtianity, could ever be tranſacted any where.

SECT. XV.

Fifthly, IT is ſtill more incredible, and, I think, what the fondeſt Credulity in nature can ſcarce admit of, *That theſe books ſhould be abuſed, or new ones coined in the room of them, by a confederacy of all the Parties and Sects of* Chriſtians *throughout the world.*

This, therefore, we will let paſs as a piece of abſurdity, which ſufficiently diſcovers it ſelf at firſt ſight.

SECT. XVI.

Sixthly, NOR will it require much more pains for any conſidering perſon to aſſure himſelf, *That this could never poſſibly be done by any party of men, who were open and avowed enemies to the* Chriſtian Religion.

For if there be reaſon to conclude it abſurd and impoſſible, that any party of or in the Chriſtian Church, ſhould ever accompliſh ſuch a deſign, notwithſtanding all the care and jealouſy of the reſt; there is much ſtronger reaſon to conclude, that a cheat of this nature could never be carried on by a club of profeſſed enemies, in ſpite of the ſagacity and zeal of the whole body of Chriſtians in all Nations; who were deeply concerned, upon many accounts, to ſee that they were not impoſed upon in matters of ſuch importance.

SECT. XVII.

Secondly, TO compleat the argument, let any reaſonable man lay the following conſiderations together, and then tell me, *Whether he can ſeriouſly believe, that the* Chriſtian *World is abuſed, in taking the books of the* New Teſtament *for what they are generally believed to be.*

As theſe books were firſt written in the moſt celebrated language then in the world; ſo they were quickly diſperſed abroad, and tranſlated into a vaſt number of other languages, very different from that in which they were originally compoſed.

They have not been kept in private hands, as myſterious things, which mankind were not to be acquainted with; but in publick Repoſitories, where all perſons might ſearch and look into them.

The *Chriſtians* have ever eſteemed them as the grand Charter of all their Privileges, and the foundation of their hopes of happineſs in another life.

They have been publickly cited and referred to by the earlieſt Writers and Apologiſts for the *Chriſtian* cauſe; nay, and by enemies themſelves: Which had been intolerable folly and ſtupidity on both ſides, if the world had not been well aſſured they were genuine.

They were, many of them, directed to large bodies and ſocieties of men, in different parts of the world.

They have been conſtantly rehearſed in ſolemn aſſemblies, beſides being privately ſtudied and diſcourſed of; by all which means, they muſt neceſſarily be impreſſed on the minds and memories of men.

All factions and parties of *Chriſtians* have unanimouſly agreed to appeal hither, and decide their controverſies by this rule.

No

No notion of forgery or corruption was ever advanced by ſuch delinquents as were excommunicated, and cut off from the body of the *Chriſtian* Church: Which perſons, as they could not avoid being let into the ſecret, if there had been any ſuch thing, while they continued members; ſo they had the moſt urgent provocations to reveal it afterwards.

The Doctrines they contain are not only new, but are of an extraordinary nature, and ſuch as challenge the attention and regard of all mankind; and therefore in reaſon, very likely both to attract the curioſity of indifferent perſons, and to rouze the ill nature of carping and contradicting enemies to enquire into them, and ſift them thorowly.

Beſides, the doctrines which theſe books now ſhew us are all of them ſuch as ſuit perfectly well with the deſign of ſuch a Religion, as the *Chriſtian* Religion is. They ſuppoſe a *crucified Saviour*, and Salvation by *Faith* in him; and adminiſter ſuch comforts and ſupports, as in the nature of the thing, are the moſt agreeable and proper for perſons who devote themſelves to the ſeeking of future happineſs, in ſuch a way as the followers of *Jeſus Chriſt* do.

Laſtly, Let a man who doubts in this caſe, put this, Queſtion to himſelf, and endeavour to reſolve it fairly.

Would thoſe, who corrupted the old, or forged a new Goſpel, ever have made ſuch a ſyſtem of it, at that which is at this day, and has been for ſo many ages, received in the world?

I dare ſay, no man in his right wits can ever perſwade himſelf to believe this: But from the very ſcope and matter of theſe Writings, as well as other Indications, will conclude, *That they cannot be the Work of any Impoſtor or Impoſtors whatever.* But more of this by and by. So that upon the whole, from what has been ſaid, I think we may, with ſufficient advantage, infer,

Coroll. 1. *That ſince theſe books could not be counterfeited or corrupted, the matters of fact, and the Doctrines contained in them, are the very ſame with what thoſe antient* Chriſtian *Writers, the authors of them, did firſt give an account of to the world.*

Coroll. 2. *That there are no writings any where extant,* let them be of any authors whatſoever, *whoſe purity and genuineneſs are to be proved by arguments of ſo grand a nature, and thoſe ſo many in number, as may be produced in favour of the books of the* New Teſtament.

SECT. XVIII.

BUT there are thoſe who will be ready to ask, how this diſcourſe is reconcilable to what ſome have pretended to ſhew in fact, *viz. That the books of the* New Teſtament *have been tampered with and abuſed, in many reſpects, ſince the time of their firſt publication to the world.*

I anſwer, Tho' there have been ſome, who have taken no little pains to leſſen the credit of theſe books, by raking up all the little faults they could poſſibly light on; nay, and even mentioning more than they dare ſtand by, were the matter to be well looked into: However, my aſſertions are no way inconſiſtent with the diſcoveries reſulting from their laudible endeavours, but may very well be reconciled to them, as will be ſufficiently plain, by comparing the utmoſt they can pretend to prove, with what we make no ſcruple of granting.

For when I ſpeak of theſe writings being genuine and uncorrupt, I do not intend hereby, that they have undergone no alteration or corruption in trivial matters; that is, in things which are not of the ſubſtance of them. I do not ſuppoſe, that every letter, ſyllable, or word,

word, is exactly the ſame, as when the laſt Hands of their reſpective Authors were ſet to them. The learned know well enough, that there are multitudes of ways, by which Books may be abuſed; and that, perhaps, no Book in the world, of any moment, has ever eſcaped this Fate, but had its Share of Corruption, the common Calamity at one time or other, either more or leſs. They know how Writings may be worn out, and defaced by *Time*, the great Conſumer of all things; as well as to what Injuries they may be expoſed, by the other ordinary Accidents of life: How eaſy it is for Miſtakes to ariſe from the bare omiſſion of *Points of diſtinction*; or from the uſe of *Symbols* and *Characters*, or any ſort of Contractions and Abridgments in writing: how he that dictates to another, may poſſibly not judge rightly of ſeveral Letters, whoſe Beauty is either loſt by age, or, perhaps, were but baſely written at firſt: How he may miſtake thoſe Letters, which are of a reſembling figure and ſhape, one for another: How unaccurately and imperfectly he may pronounce his words, and ſo lead him who tranſcribes into an Error; or, perhaps, ſeeing the very ſame word or words, various times repeated, might heedleſsly skip from one to the other, and ſo leave out all in the Author that was between them; or, perhaps, for want of Skill and Judgment in the Matter he is concerned in, may transfer ordinary Notes and Gloſſes from the Margin into the Text or Body of the Book. The Learned know likewiſe, that thoſe who write, as well as thoſe who dictate, may fall into many ſorts of Blunders and Miſtakes. They may hear what is dictated to them imperfectly and by halves; they may be more intent upon ſome Notions in their own Minds, than the Buſineſs lying before them; and ſo write, not ſo much what they hear, as what they are at that time thinking of; or at leaſt, may poſſibly ſhape and modify what they hear, too much according to their own way of ſpeaking and thinking; but above all, by want of

Skill

Skill in *Grammar*, and eſpecially the knowledge of the antient *Orthography*, by which means all the Changes in the Forms of Letters would be unknown to them, it is not unlikely that many ſuch Errors ſhould be committed, as would require ſome Skill and Judgment to diſcover and correct afterwards.

I need not add, that the careleſneſs of thoſe who have the inſpection of Libraries, the raſh and preſumptuous Attempts of *Criticks*, the ſly and villainous Practices of *Impoſtors*, in ſome circumſtances, may be the occaſion of Miſchief and Diſorder this way.

All theſe things muſt be allowed, becauſe they are certainly true in Fact, as might eaſily be proved, if this were a proper place for it. Now upon theſe, and ſuch like Conſiderations, I very eaſily allow, that the writings of theſe old *Chriſtian* Authors, might, in proceſs of time, be expoſed, in ſome meaſure, to the ordinary fate of the world. I mean, that ſome ſuch σφάλματα may have crept into them, as are very poſſible, and likely to ariſe from ſome or other of the forementioned Cauſes. But what will any Man infer from this? We all agree, that this derogates nothing from the credit and authority of any Writing. We do not reject a Book as ſpurious, becauſe we have ſome proofs of its having ſuffered in matters of leſs moment. For if we ſhould proceed upon that principle, it is demonſtrable in Fact, *That we ſhould leave ourſelves no Authors to read or quote, but muſt abandon them by whole Catalogues to the Flames; even thoſe whoſe Authority we now lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon, and think it infinitely ridiculous to queſtion.*

I muſt therefore make a ſtand here with this Concluſion, before I proceed any farther, *viz. That we muſt either not reject the Writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, as ſpurious, or fundamentally corrupted, upon the account of ſuch Faults as we find to be common with them, and the Works of other Authors, which we receive as genuine:* Or elſe, *We muſt agree to reject both one and the other*; *and ſo,*

so, together with the New Testament, *deny the Credit of all Books, that we cannot demonstrate to have been less abused, than that system of the* Christian *Religion has been.* And if so, I believe I may safely ask the Criticks, and all those Men, whose Learning lies only in great reading, What is become of all your boasted knowledge, and to what purpose have you spent your time in poring upon a parcel of old Authors, which you are perfectly cheated in, and who never talked any of those things, which you so much value and admire in them?

So that therefore, laying all these matters together, the many ways that there are by which Writings may come to contract Faults, as also what has actually come to pass in the certain abuse and corruption of Books, which celebrated Men of old † have so freely owned, and so much complained of: It would be an indiscreet and ridiculous piece of Zeal, to say, that every Letter and Word of these evangelical and apostolical Books, had been preserved in the same good order and purity, with which they were at first composed, through all the succeeding ages and revolutions of the World, down to the present time. On the other hand, I am very ready to allow, *That they may, in length of time, have suffered some of those common Misfortunes, which Books have always been exposed to, ever since there have been Books in the World.*

But then what I affirm is this, *viz. That those Writings, which are now in our hands, are the very Writings which the Apostles and Evangelists left behind them; and that not only as to the main matter and substance of them;*

† Βιβλιπῶλαι τινες ΓΡΑΦΕΥΣΙ ΦΑΥΔΟΙΣ χρώμενοι, καὶ οὐκ ἀντιβάλλοντες, &c. Strabo *speaking of the Works of* Aristotle *and* Theophrastus, *and the Abuses they had suffered.* lib. 13. pag. 419.

De Latinis vero [Libris] quo me vertam nescio, ita MENDOSE & scribuntur, & veneunt. *Cicer. ad Fratrem Quintum. lib.* 3, *epist.* 5.

but

but alſo as to all Circumſtances of neceſſary moment to Chriſtian Doctrine and Practice: So far are they from being the Inventions of other Perſons impoſed upon the World in their Name and Stead.

And this appeared to be ſuch plain and undeniable Matter of Fact in ſome of the paſt Ages of Chriſtianity, that the moſt virulent Enemies then in being could not poſſibly refuſe granting it; or, at leaſt, intimating it in ſuch manner, as evidently ſhewed they took it for a certain Truth. Thus † *Julian*, who ſeemeth deſirous to ſay ſomething that might render the Divinity of *Jeſus Chriſt* ſuſpected, argues, That neither *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, nor *Paul* himſelf, ever preſumed to call him God; but it was St. *John*, ὁ χρυσὸς Ἰωάννης, that talked after this manner. Now, how wrong ſoever he was in his Obſervation, yet his Conceſſion deſerves to be particularly taken notice of. For he lets us know here, that he took thoſe Writings, which in his time bore the Names of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, *Paul*, to be the genuine Products of thoſe Authors; or elſe there had been very little Senſe in his quoting them, to the purpoſe that he does quote them in this Paſſage. Now the Emperor was no Fool, whatever other ill Characters he juſtly deſerved; and he was certainly very ſenſible, that the Evidences for the genuineneſs of theſe Books were at that time of day in the World ſo very clear and convincing, that it would have been plainly ſcandalous for a Man to have called them in queſtion: Or elſe he had run upon the Chriſtians after another manner; and inſtead of citing theſe Books in ſo tame and innocent a way, as he has here done, he would have expoſed them as ſo many pieces of horrid Impoſture, and the Chriſtians as the worſt of Fools for thinking otherwiſe.

† Τὸν γοῦν Ἰησοῦν ὅτι Παῦλος ἐτόλμησεν εἰπεῖν Θεὸν, ὅτι Ματθαῖος, ὅτι Λουκᾶς, ὅτι Μάρκος, ἀλλ' ὁ χρυσὸς Ἰωάννης, &c. Cyril. contra Julian. *lib.* 10. *pag.* 327.

All

All that I ſhall remark upon what has been ſaid, is only this, *That if theſe Books were looked upon as authentick, even by the ſmarteſt and moſt induſtrious Enemies of* Chriſtianity, *at that time*, which was about the middle of the fourth Century, *there is leſs reaſon to ſuſpect their being either counterfeited, or fundamentally corrupted ſince.* Becauſe, as there have been fewer Perſecutions, and much leſs profeſſed Enmity to the Chriſtian Religion in the World, ſince that time than before; ſo there have been more Occaſions for Mankind to ſearch and enquire into them, as well as better Opportunities to vindicate and defend them.

SECT. XIX.

I Know the idle Curioſity of ſome People prompts them to argue here from the common Opinion of the Chriſtians concerning the Divine Authority of theſe Writings.

Do not you think that Providence ſhould have preſerved Books of ſuch a Character, as you ſay theſe are, free from all manner of Corruption? Should there not have been a Guard ſet upon them, that they might have paſſed pure and ſincere, thro' all the Accidents and Revolutions of the World, even to the laſt Generation of Men? Other Books are of no Importance to the Salvation of Mankind, as it is pretended theſe are; and therefore, one would think, theſe ſhould never have been ſuffered to be treated ſo rudely as the reſt, but have ſhone always in their own native Luſtre and Purity, convincing the World thereby of God's care of them, and conſequently of their divine Original.

Anſw. I confeſs, indeed, this Objection looks plauſible; but a Man would abuſe it highly, that ſhould complement it with the Name of a rational one, as reaſonable as it appears.

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Providence, I allow, would be concerned to preſerve a Divine Revelation from all ſuch Blemiſhes as ſhould repreſent it unworthy of God, or render it unfit for the ſervice of Mankind, by abuſing and diſguiſing it ſo, that the divine Will, and their Duty ſhould not be known and collected from thence with ſufficient plainneſs and certainty. But when this is ſaid and granted, there is all.

I hope theſe Gentlemen do not ſuppoſe, that God is obliged to be always working new Miracles to do that which may be done in an ordinary way by the bare induſtry and care of Mankind.

The firſt Publiſhers of a Divine Revelation to the World ought to be inſpired from Heaven; but that Inſpiration was not to be continued to every *Librarian* or *Amanuenſis*, to prevent their making Blunders, and ſtumbling upon one Letter, or Word, or Sound, inſtead of another. For Men may avoid theſe things of themſelves, if they will but be thoughtful and diligent; and if they are not, I preſume we are not to throw their Faults upon Providence, and blame that, becauſe theſe Men have neglected either to ſtudy Languages, or to learn to read and write well, or to look after the Books committed to their cuſtody and management as they ought to have done.

Infinite wiſdom having adjuſted and ſettled the general Laws of the World, and reſolved upon ſuch a chain of Events as ſhould be the moſt beautiful and agreeable, permits things to go on according to the ordinary tenor of thoſe Laws, without any miraculous Interpoſitions, except where it is requiſite ſo to be, in order to the obtaining of ſome very valuable end, which cannot otherwiſe be obtained, or would be beſt obtained by the way of Miracles. And therefore it was not neceſſary, that all thoſe who ſhould dictate or tranſcribe the Copies, even of divine Writings themſelves, ſhould be render'd infallible: That the Parchments they were written

ten on ſhould wear like Braſs, and the Ink never loſe its Strength and Colour: That any falſe Hand, attempting to abuſe them, ſhould be ſtopped by a ſudden Convulſion or Palſy; or that the great Turns and Revolutions of the World ſhould be prevented, leſt by ſuch Combuſtions amongſt Men, thoſe Books ſhould come by any Prejudice. Such effects as theſe are quite beſide the order and conſtitution of the World, as God has been pleaſed to make, and does ordinarily govern it. What we may depend upon, from the care and direction of Divine Providence, in ſuch an Affair, is this, *viz. That if God ſent a Revelation of his Mind into the World, he would order Matters ſo, that it ſhould be preſerved and continued in ſuch Circumſtances as it was fit and neceſſary a Divine Revelation ſhould be continued in, as long as he determined to make uſe of it for the ends of teaching and inſtruction amongſt Men.* And this, well conſidered, will, I hope, be enough to make the Objection propoſed appear to be no more than barely plauſible.

But beſides this, there is ſomething elſe to be ſaid in this matter, which, I am apt to think, we ought to have ſome regard to. God, who has endowed us with ſuch excellent Powers of Reaſon and Judgment, which we are capable of uſing in ſo nice and critical a manner in natural Enquiries, and all the common affairs of life, might very juſtly oblige us to exerciſe that Reaſon to as good purpoſe in the matters of our Salvation. He deals with us, undoubtedly, according to the Capacities and Abilities he has furniſhed us withal; and having made us rational Beings, would have our Faith itſelf to be, in the Senſe I am now ſpeaking of, a truly rational one. Why then ſhould we not be put to uſe our Reaſon, in judging of thoſe Books which pretend to be Divine; as well as in judging of others? We can, in ſome Circumſtances of Evidence, conclude a Profane Author to be genuine, notwithſtanding all the Corruption, we are ſure he has ſuffered. And Providence might, very wiſe-

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ly and equitably appoint us to do the ſame work with reſpect to a Divine Revelation.

For by ſuch a Diſpenſation God ſhews that he requires nothing of us in order to a Conviction of his Truth; but that we act like Men, and uſe the Powers he has given us in ſuch a manner, as they were plainly deſigned for.

SECT. XX.

HAving thus ſhewn upon what Grounds we may ſatisfy ourſelves of the Purity of the Writings of the New Teſtament; as alſo, that they are the genuine and undoubted Works of ſuch and ſuch Authors, whoſe Names they bear, and who lived in the moſt early times of Chriſtianity: I may now ſafely proceed to make uſe of them under this Notion, as I have occaſion; not appealing to them as Books that contain any thing of Divine Revelation, but as ordinary Writings, which I may conſult and refer to, in the way of Diſcourſe, as I would thoſe of any other Author whatſoever. And tho' the ſame things which theſe Writers ſay, be alſo ſaid by many others beſides them; yet they being the firſt, and thoſe, conſequently, from whom all other Chriſtian Hiſtorians have had their Accounts, it is moſt expedient that we go to the Fountain Head, and take our Informations immediately from them.

And now the Buſineſs which lies before us is, to propoſe, examine, and argue upon the Evidences which are brought to perſuade the Belief of the Fact of *Chriſt's Reſurrection.*

SECT. XXI.

AND the firſt general Head that I ſhall inſiſt on ſhall be that of the *Characters*, *Qualifications*, and

and other circumſtances relating to thoſe perſons who declared themſelves the witneſſes of this Fact.

Now here are many things to be conſidered; which I ſhall therefore propoſe, with as much clearneſs and brevity as I can, without doing the argument an injury.

SECT. XXII.

First, *BEſides the Apoſtles, who were in a more eminent manner the witneſſes of the* Reſurrection of Chriſt, *there were divers others who did unanimouſly agree in teſtifying this thing to be true.*

Their number was ſo far from being ſmall and deſpicable, that one of the Chriſtian writers, who ſtiles himſelf the *Apoſtle of the Gentiles*, aſſures us, that in his time there was ſtill remaining the greater part of more than five hundred, who did all at one time ſee *Jeſus Chriſt* after his riſing again.

Now tho' this article of the number of perſons who are the witneſſes of a matter of Fact, abſtracting from all other conſiderations, is not in itſelf abſolutely convincing and concluſive; yet it carries ſomething along with it, that makes a mighty impreſſion on a man's mind that conſiders it well. For tho' an impoſture may lie concealed for a while in a few hands; yet it is next to impoſſible that it ſhould lie undiſcovered in a great many. It ſhocks a man to think that ſo many perſons ſhould agree in all the punctilioes of a notorious lye, and that they ſhould agree to ſtand by it in ſo peremptory a manner as theſe perſons did: That ſuch a number of falſe hearts and tongues ſhould ſo exactly keep time with one another, and never claſh in any Inſtance whatſoever; but, by a perfect harmony and conſent, delude the world into a belief of the truth of what they affirmed. It is commonly obſerved, that plots

never thrive ſo well, as when there are but few let into the ſecret; and large cabals of knaves and liars ſeldom fail to tell tales of one another.

However, all that I inſiſt upon from hence is this, *That there is, at leaſt, a good degree of probability, that the teſtimony concerning* Chriſt's Reſurrection *was not a falſe one, ariſing from this conſideration; That it was not one or two only who gave this teſtimony, but a number far ſuperior to what the credit of ſome of the moſt valuable accounts of matters of fact in the world have depended upon.*

This is what I do not beg, ſince it is eaſy enough to make out the truth of it; and, I believe, theſe Gentlemen will hardly demand of me a proof they know to be ſo very obvious and near at hand.

I am well contented, therefore, to have advanced thus much in the firſt place. If they think it but a little, I deſire they would have patience to go on calmly to the ſucceeding ſteps; and I am much miſtaken, if they do not find the argument to run on to a ſufficient length by that time we have done with it.

SECT. XXIII.

Secondly, *THE Teſtimony of thoſe perſons deſerves the more regard, in that they teſtified a thing which they declared they had perſonal knowledge of.*

Now in any caſe, when a man pretends to ſenſible demonſtration for the truth of what he ſays, he is to be heard with a great deal of attention; and unleſs he has, upon ſome other accounts, given mankind juſt ground, either to ſuſpect or deſpiſe him, it is enough to make all ſober people conclude, that there is ſomething in the matter which deſerves to be ſeriouſly enquired and looked into. But when a great number of perſons ſhall come, and atteſt with one accord that they were actually eye-witneſſes to ſuch or ſuch a thing, and are

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as much assured of the truth of it, as they can be of any thing which their eyes discover to them every day in the world: This will make all men, in their right senses, see an absolute necessity, either of receiving their report as true, or else of alledging some very substantial reasons for the rejecting of it. Now this is the case here. These persons did not only see *Jesus Christ*; but many of them declare, that they saw him frequently and familiarly; and that for such a term of time, as can leave no room to doubt, whether fancy and imagination had any thing to do in the business or no. They conversed with him for forty days; they eat and drank with him; they saw him do several wondrous works. They received orders and instructions from him about the institution and government of his Church: He bid them *go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things that he had commanded*; and in so doing, he promised them his presence and blessing: *That he would be always with them to the end of the World, and send the promise of the Father upon them*; and therefore commanded them, *to tarry in the City of* Jerusalem, *till they were endued with power from on high.* He told them expresly, That signs should follow those that believe: *That in his Name they should cast out Devils; speak with new Tongues; take up Serpents; and if they drank any deadly thing, it should not hurt them:* That they should have the Gift of miraculous healing; so that *if they laid their hands on the sick, they should recover.* They declare, that he upbraided them with *their Unbelief*, and *hardness of Heart*, in not believing the reality of his *Resurrection*, upon the Testimony of those who had seen him; and that one particularly, who was incredulous beyond all the rest, was indulged so far as to have all the demonstration that seeing, hearing, and feeling could afford him, in order to his satisfaction: That they were blessed and comforted by him; and after they had re-

ceived his laſt commands and directions, ſaw him actually taken up from them, and aſcend into Heaven; and that after this, they returned to *Jeruſalem*, and waiting there according to his appointment, they were endued with power from above, receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his promiſe. This is what theſe perſons teſtified.

Now here is no room for imagination and dream in all this account. Men could never fancy that they ſaw a perſon for ſo many weeks together, whom they never ſaw at all; that he eat and drunk in their preſence; that he argued and expounded the ſcriptures to them; convinced them of ſeveral errors and miſtakes; gave them promiſes, rules, and inſtructions for their own comfort, and the government of a church in the world; and after all, went up into Heaven in their ſight, whilſt Angels ſtood by and told them, *That he which was taken up into Heaven, ſhould come in like manner again, as they had ſeen him go from them:* This, I ſay, could never poſſibly be dream and fancy. So that if this teſtimony of theirs was falſe, nothing remains but they muſt be notorious cheats, and all this ſtory a pure forgery, a mere lye from one end to the other. And therefore, what we have farther to do, is to ſee what reaſons we have to believe, or not believe, *That they were really men of ſo profligate a character, and did abſolutely abuſe mankind in this account they gave of the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

SECT. XXIV.

Thirdly, *THerefore the manner in which this teſtimony was delivered engages a high degree of attention to it.*

There could be nothing more ſolemn and awful than the way wherein the Apoſtles addreſſed themſelves to

to mankind, when they teſtified the *Reſurrection of Chriſt Jeſus.*

They declared they did this not of themſelves, or from any inferior motives and incitements, but by God's order and appointment. They invoked his tremendous name, and begged his aſſiſtance and bleſſing. They appealed to him, as the omniſcient judge of the world, concerning the ſincerity and integrity of their hearts. They propoſed their doctrine, as the word and law of God; by which they themſelves, as well as thoſe that heard them, were to be ſaved. And as all this was done with the utmoſt poſſible gravity and ſerioufneſs; ſo for a confirmation of the truth of all, they declared they had received from Heaven *a power of working ſigns and wonders*; to the plain and viſible effects of which they referred their hearers, as proofs that God was with them of a truth, and that they were authorized by him to do what they did.

Now ſuch ſolemn appeals to, and invocations of the divine majeſty, ſo publickly, ſo frequently, and ſo devoutly made, are certainly, at leaſt, equivalent to any thing of religious oaths or ſwearing, ever uſed amongſt mankind, in order to procure a belief of the truth of what is aſſerted. And we know that ſuch forms of addreſs to God Almighty are held ſo ſacred amongſt all people, that they paſs for undiſputed proof in caſes of fact, where plain and evident reaſons to the contrary do not appear. And very good reaſon there is why it ſhould be ſo; for it is not to be preſumed that men would be ſo wicked as to diſavow the divine mercy and clemency, and imprecate the divine vengeance on themſelves, upon any ſuch little motives as they can have preſented to them in any of their concerns and dealing with one another. There is indeed no doubt to be made but ſome Men have been actually thus profane and irreligious, as having no notions at all of the divine Being, or his fearful judgments. But this is no ob-

jection at all: For as the ſecret atheiſm and wickedneſs of men's hearts can be known only to God himſelf; ſo, unleſs we ſee ſome manifeſt ſigns, or have ſome ſufficient proofs of ſuch a vile temper, by which thoſe perſons have juſtly forfeited our good Opinion of them, we are not to preſume it; but, on the other hand, to ſuppoſe they have a juſt regard to God Almighty, and do conſequently ſpeak the truth, when they make uſe of his holy Name upon ſuch important occaſions.

Now, I ſay, this being the caſe here, the Apoſtles Teſtimony concerning the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, delivered with ſuch confirmations to the world, does certainly deſerve the higheſt attention and regard; and what I plead for on this ſcore is what is allowed to be juſt and reaſonable amongſt all Nations whatſoever.

SECT. XXV.

Fourthly, IT is to be conſidered too, *That theſe perſons did not talk of a matter that was tranſacted at a diſtance from the place where they gave their Teſtimony, nor a long time after the thing itſelf was ſaid to be done.*

I confeſs, a ſtory concerning ſome ſtrange and wonderful thing, reported to be done in a remote country, and a conſiderable number of years before the account of it was publiſhed to the world, may, in ſome circumſtances, be juſtly liable to objections, upon the ſcore of the want of opportunity to make the neceſſary enquiries into it. But the caſe is quite otherwiſe here. Theſe men appeared upon the very ſpot that was the ſcene of the action; and told the *Jews* they might be ſatisfied of the truth of it, even at their own doors. *Jeruſalem*, the very place of our Saviour's Crucifixion and Death, they conſtantly affirmed to be the place where he roſe again. And as they did not ſend people a great way

way to enquire; ſo neither did they defer the Publication of it till *Jeſus Chriſt* was forgotten, and his Story worn out in the Country where they preached his *Reſurrection:* But inſtead of that they did it while it was freſh, and in the Mouths of all Men; and while thoſe Perſons, who could eaſily convict them for Cheats and Impoſtors, if they had been ſo, were ready to be produced, if occaſion ſerved. I will not prevent myſelf here, by ſaying what will come with more advantage under another Head: Only this I ſhall ſay, that the *Death of Chriſt* was ſo publick a thing, and there were ſo many acquainted with all the Circumſtances of that Tragedy, ſome of whom were deeply concerned too to have prevented his riſing again, if any Human Art or Care could have hindred it, that Men, who made ſo much haſte to preach that ſurprizing and unwelcome Doctrine of his being actually riſen again, would have found Enemies enough to confront them and prove them Liars, if they had not had evident Truth of their Side.

SECT. XXVI.

Fifthly, *THEY did not make a Secret of this Buſineſs, but declared it in the moſt publick and open manner that could poſſibly be,*

It was not a Story privately whiſper'd amongſt themſelves, or communicated only to thoſe of their own Party; but they proclaim'd it in the Ears of all the People, and choſe ſuch a time to begin, wherein *Jeruſalem being crouded with Foreigners of all Nations*, there was no want of perſons able and curious enough to enquire into the Truth of the ſtrange Report they made. So far were they from any ſly and clandeſtine management in this Caſe, that they went into the *Synagogues* of the *Jews*, nay, into the *Temple* itſelf, where there was no likelihood of a thin Auditory, and preached the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*. And as if it was

intended that all poſſible objections ſhould be taken off which might ſeem to intimate their being afraid of great men, and that they addreſſed themſelves only to the mob upon this occaſion, they appeared in the moſt auguſt councils of the *Jews*, and teſtified to the faces of the High-Prieſts and Rulers what they had taught the common people before. It was a very remarkable ſpeech which St. *Peter* made to this purpoſe in one of thoſe grand aſſemblies: *Ye Rulers of the people, and elders of* Iſrael! *If we be this day examined of the good deed done to the impotent Man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known to you all, and to all the people of* Iſrael, *that by the Name of* Jeſus Chriſt *of* Nazareth, *whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole. This is the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there ſalvation in any other: For there is no other Name under Heaven, given amongſt men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.*

What freedom and ſpirit appears in every line of this diſcourſe? No man ſure can charge the Apoſtles with making a ſecret of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, when they dared proclaim it with ſo much briskneſs to thoſe who had been the authors of his death. A man can ſcarce forbear thinking how the Council looked upon this bold charge; ſo many grave, wiſe, and learned ſeniors, as there were of them, to be thus attacked by two ignorant and illiterate men! The author of that hiſtory tell us, *that they marvelled.* And well they might; for, beſides that the ſubject of the diſcourſe was very ungrateful to them, they expected, as men of figure and grandeur, to be addreſſed to with more ceremony and reſpect. Yet this was all the compliment they had, to be told, *They were the murderers of* Chriſt; *and that God has raiſed him up from the dead, to be the univerſal Lord and Saviour of the world.* Sad tidings to thoſe who ſtood in defiance of him! And the more provoking

king too, in that they were told of it in the Preſence of all thoſe People, who, following their Example, had condemned him for an Impoſtor.

And very ſtrange it was, that the Council ſhould let the Matter paſs as they did. Could not they have replied to the Apoſtles, *You make a Noiſe about a thing, which the whole Nation knows to be an egregious Cheat? You pretend that Chriſt roſe from the Dead, when here is plain and undeniable Proof, which ſhall preſently be produced to you, that there was no ſuch matter; but you, by ſome deceitful Arts, conveyed his Body away?* Such a Declaration as this, back'd with anſwerable Proof, and ſuch bold Management as always accompanies Truth and a clear Conſcience, would have effectually ſilenced theſe Preachers, and put a final Stop to the progreſs of their Religion. But inſtead of this, they ſneak, and grow cool upon the Matter; the whole Council is confuſed, and they order the Apoſtles to withdraw, while they lay their Heads together, and agree upon ſome proper Anſwer to be returned to them. And at laſt, as the Reſult of all their Conſultations, they command them to ſpeak no more in the Name of *Jeſus*, threatening them with their Reſentments if they did, and ſo thought fit to diſmiſs them: Which is the very thing that men conſcious of the Truth, and ſelf-condemned would have done in the ſame Caſe. However, the Apoſtles little regarding theſe Injunctions, went on with their work; and quickly gave the Council a freſh Occaſion to call them in queſtion for their Diſobedience. And St. *Peter*, as the Mouth of the reſt, gave ſuch Reaſons why they diſobeyed, as thoſe great Men could by no means digeſt, but were extremely uneaſie under. *We ought to obey God, rather than Men. The God of our Fathers raiſed up* Jeſus, *whom ye ſlew and hanged upon a Tree: Him hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to* Iſrael, *and forgiveneſs of Sins: And we are*

his

his Witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo is alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

This ſhort Sermon, ſays the Hiſtorian, *cut them to the Heart, and they took Counſel to ſlay them.* A moſt effectual way of anſwering Arguments, to execute thoſe who drive them on too far! However, they contented themſelves with leſs Severities for that time; and having beaten the Apoſtles, ſent them out of the Council, *rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for the Name of* Jeſus; and aſſured, even by the Confeſſion of the High-Prieſts themſelves, that they had *filled all* Jeruſalem *with their Doctrine.*

SECT. XXVII.

Sixthly, *THESE Perſons were ſuch, whoſe* † *Probity and Virtue their worſt Adverſaries never did,* and therefore for certain never could, *pretend to call in queſtion.*

That they were reproach'd and vilify'd by the world, is, indeed, very certain; but this was what they were forewarned of, what they expected themſelves, and what their Doctrine would naturally produce. But what I intend is, that no Adverſary whatever, ever made an Offer to ſhew the World, *that they were ill Men.* And I think, I rightly infer from thence, *that therefore they could not.*

For Men in ſuch Circumſtances, as the firſt Preachers of this Doctrine, were not to expect any thing of Ceremony or Compliment; but had there been any grounds to ſuſpect their good Manners and Veracity, we may conclude Mankind had not failed to know it: Becauſe all imaginable Reaſons of Intereſt and Policy engaged

† Τὸν βίον ἄκρως κεκοσμημένοι, καὶ ἀρετῇ πάσῃ τὰς ψυχὰς κεκοσμημένοι. Euſeb. de Apoſtol. Hiſt. Eccleſ. *lib.* 3. *cap.* 24.

their

their Enemies to what could be done to ſtop the Progreſs of *Chriſtianity*; which, if it proſpered, would infallibly † ſubvert all the Laws and Cuſtoms which they and their Anceſtors had ſo great a Fondneſs for. Now nothing would more effectually have daſhed this new Religion, and conſequently have ſecured the old ones from the Encroachments of it, than to have made it apparent that the firſt Spreaders thereof were Men of vicious Lives and Principles, and, in reality, infinitely far from all that Sanctity and Devotion they ſo much pretended to.

Beſides, it is a remarkable Inſtance that we have in particular of the Integrity and Candour of theſe Perſons, that they do not ſcruple to take notice of the common Infirmities of human nature in one another; that they ſpeak ſo ſparingly in their own Praiſe, and enlarge ſo little on the Vices of their Adverſaries, under all the Provocations they had to the contrary.

They needed not to have told the World their own Doubts and Fears about the Truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*; how they doubted before, and how they doubted afterwards, even while they were looking on him. Nor would they have done thus, if they had been arrant Cheats and Impoſtors: No; they would have kept all that to themſelves, as not poſſible to be of any Uſe to an impious Cauſe. Whereas theſe, and other Inſtances of their free, open, and impartial Management, evidently diſcover good Temper, Modeſty, and a ſtrict regard to Truth, which are the Qualifications we always look after, in order to the repoſing a Confidence in any Perſon.

SECT. XXVIII.

Seventhly, THEY *were Perſons of mean and vulgar Circumſtances in all reſpects.*

† *Odio dignus eſt (videlicet Chriſtus) quod ex orbe religiones expulit, quod ad Deorum cultum prohibuit accedi.* Ita Ethnicus apud Arnob. lib. 2.

I ſpeak

I ſpeak here chiefly of the Apoſtles of whom we have the largeſt and moſt particular Accounts.

They were not bred up in Courts, or engaged in ſuch a way of living, wherein the Arts and Intrigues of the World were either taught or practiſed.

They were not men of polite Converſation, that, by the helps of Philoſophy and Elegancy of Speech, were able to inſinuate a Fondneſs, and raiſe an Eſteem of themſelves, in the reſt of Mankind: But their Diſcourſes were plain and homely *, as well as their Education and Condition in the World; ſuch as could neither prompt their Ambition, nor qualify them for great Attempts.

It is true, indeed, there was one particularly, I mean St. *Paul*, who muſt be excepted; as being a Man of very polite Learning, and well acquainted with the World. But this ſhews, that as *Chriſtianity* was far from being incompatible with refined Senſe and Knowledge; ſo the Author of it, tho' he would make no uſe of Human Learning himſelf in the Propagation of his Religion, yet was pleaſed to take away a Stumbling-block from the perverſe and froward World, by making uſe of a learned Man.

SECT. XXIX.

Eighthly, *THEY could not poſſibly have any ſecular Intereſt in view, by preaching ſuch a Doctrine as this to the World.*

This is ſo true, that it is very evident on the other hand, that to act ſuch a Part as they did, was going a-

* Τὴν δὲ γλῶτταν ἰδιωτεύοντες, τῇ γε μὴν πρὸς τοῦ Σωτῆρος αὐτοῖς δεδωρημένῃ θείᾳ καὶ παραδοξοπονῶ δυνάμει σθαρσοῦντες, τὸ μὲν ἐν πρινοίᾳ καὶ τέχνῃ λόγων τὰ τοῦ Διδασκάλου μαθήματα προσβεύειν οὔτε ἤδεσαν οὔτε ἐνεχείρουν. Euſeb. Loc. ult. citat.

gainſt

gainſt all the Rules of worldly Intereſt and Policy: and it is impoſſible they ſhould ever have had any Proſpect before them from the World, but what muſt be very frightful and diſcouraging. Here was a Company of men, who made as mean and ordinary a Figure, by the Accompliſhments of their Minds, as by their outward Port and Behaviour, and they come and give a ſtrange Account of *Jeſus Chriſt*, viz. *How that after a cruel Death, which the* Jews *put him to at* Jeruſalem, *he was raiſed up again by the Power of God; and, after ſome time, carried up into Heaven, where he ſat inveſted with Divine Glory and Majeſty, having all things put in Subjection to him.* In purſuance of this Account, they challenge the Obedience of all mankind to the Laws of this *Jeſus*; declaring, there is no Salvation but by Faith in him, and denouncing Threatnings, as well as promiſing eternal Rewards in his Name, to influence the World to give heed to their Meſſage. They tell the *Jews*, they muſt believe on him, whom they had but a little before treated with the laſt degree of Outrage and Contempt, and crucified as a Malefactor: That they muſt enter upon a new Worſhip and Service of his Inſtitution; be ſtripped of all the Privileges of a ſeparate and peculiar People, and compoſe one Church, in common with the *Gentile* world. They tell the *Greeks*, they muſt ſubmit all their admired Wiſdom and Philoſophy, their Arts and Politeneſs, their Wit and Reaſonings, to the Rudeneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel; and renouncing all the Ceremonies and darling Superſtitions of their Religion and Education, hearken to the Fooliſhneſs of preaching about a crucified Saviour *.

Now ſuch a Report as this, was not like to procure them the Favour and good Opinion of any of thoſe

* *How great a Stumbling-Block the infamous Death of our Lord was to the World, and how much objected to the* Chriſtians, Juſtin Martyr, Origen, *and others, have abundantly ſhewn.*

Perſons

Perſons they addreſſed themſelves to. There was nothing in it that could ſerve to recommend them, either as Men of Wit and fine Parts, or of profound Knowledge and Learning, or of delicate Art and Invention. Indeed had they come with a pleaſant Story, that would have gratify'd the Curioſity, or flatter'd the Paſſions of Mankind; had they preached ſome refined Speculations in Philoſophy, taught Men how to acquire Fame and Renown, or directed them to ſome extraordinarily grateful and pleaſant ways of paſſing their time here in Life; it would have been natural to think they drove at ſome worldly Advantage, by feeding Men up with Fancies that would have been ſo entertaining to them. But inſtead of this, they advanced Notions that appeared abſurd and ridiculous in point of Theory; and with reſpect to Practice, were the moſt ſtrict and ſevere imaginable. They told of nothing but Afflictions and Tribulations in the preſent Life, as the certain Portion of thoſe who ſhould receive their Meſſage. They laid down this for a fundamental Rule, which they publiſhed without ſcruple, to all the World, That as the great Rewards of *Chriſtianity* were in another Life; ſo no Man ſhould ever be admitted to the Poſſeſſion of them, who would not, when called to it, forego all temporal Pleaſures and Enjoyments upon that ſcore alone.

So that it is plain, to a Demonſtration, theſe men could not propoſe to themſelves, by preaching this Doctrine, either to gain Reputation and Eſteem, or to advance their Fortunes, or to make themſelves any way great and conſiderable in the preſent world; and therefore, that they could have no ſecular Intereſt in doing what they did.

SECT.

SECT. XXX.

Ninthly, IT is to be conſider'd too, *That theſe Perſons were all of them brought up under the Prejudices of a Religion vaſtly different from that which they pretended to eſtabliſh in the World.*

It is well known, that the Apoſtles were all of them *Jews* originally; and as ſuch, they had quite other Notions of the *Meſſiah*, than that he ſhould ever die, or conſequently ever riſe from the dead. It is true, that they might have had different Notions concerning him from the Writings of the Prophets, and particularly the Book of *Iſaias*; who has, in the moſt lively and affecting manner poſſible, deſcribed his humble State and Sufferings. However, the common Opinion of the People of the *Jews* was quite another way, and they looked for a *Meſſiah* that ſhould come with outward Pomp and Splendour, to make them the moſt happy and flouriſhing Nation of the Univerſe. And accordingly it is notorious in Fact, that the Apoſtles and Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt* had no manner of Apprehenſion that he was to ſuffer things as he did from the *Jews*, and were every whit as hard to be perſuaded of the Truth of his *Reſurrection*. Nay, tho' it was affirmed, upon the Teſtimony of Senſe, by ſome of their own Company, that he was riſen again; yet they continued incredulous, or, at beſt, doubtful and wavering. And it appears, that after all the repeated Aſſurances from thoſe who declared they had ſeen him, they were not ſatisfy'd till frequent and familiar Converſation with *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf had diſſipated all their Fears, and given them full aſſurance of the reality of what they were afterwards to publiſh to the World. Now when a Caſe goes no farther than barely this, That thoſe Perſons, who are to be heard in a Matter, are not prepoſſed and prejudiced in Favour

of

of the Notions they deliver; it is a very great Advantage to the Argument, and adds a ſpecial Force to what they ſay. But when theſe ſame Perſons ſhall be prejudiced on the contrary ſide, and by their Education and Profeſſion have entertain'd Hypotheſes of quite another Nature and Tendency than that which they advance; this goes a very great way towards the compleat Satisfaction of a Man's Mind, as to the Reality and Truth of what they offer: in that it perfectly rids him of all Apprehenſions of Bigotry and Superſtition, of fond regard to Teaching and Tradition, or the Opinions of thoſe that went before, by which men are frequently very much biaſſed, and ſometimes led to profeſs Opinions, which their Judgments never ſolemnly approved of.

But this is not all; for by preaching *Chriſtianity*, they did not only go againſt the Prejudices of their Education, but alſo took a Courſe that had a direct and immediate Tendency to ſubvert all the Religion and Diſcipline they had been brought up under. For tho' *Chriſt* came not to deſtroy the *Law and the Prophets*; yet he came to aboliſh the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, and to ſubſtitute another kind of Worſhip in the room of them. And therefore, as *Judaiſm* and *Chriſtianity* could not ſtand together, but the one muſt fall, if the other kept its ground; ſo thoſe Men are vaſtly leſs obnoxious to Suſpicion in this Caſe, in that they did not vent Notions that made for the Honour of their own Law and Inſtitution, but ſuch as would infallibly undermine and ruin both, if ever they got ground in the World.

SECT. XXXI.

Tenthly, BUT then it is farther to be conſider'd *How ſevere the Laws, both of the* Jewiſh *and* Chriſtian *Religion, are againſt all kinds of Deceit, and particularly againſt Forgery and falſe Teſtimony.*

A falſe

A falſe witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed, and he that ſpeaketh lies ſhall not eſcape. And, in the ſame chapter again, *—A falſe witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed, and he that ſpeaketh lies ſhall periſh.*

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly, are his delight.

Wherefore, *Putting away lying, ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour.—*

Bleſſed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lye.

So that if theſe men did bear a falſe teſtimony in this caſe, it was in plain and open defiance, not only of the religion of their education, but of that religion likewiſe which they took upon themſelves to be the preachers of to mankind; and by which, according to their own doctrine, they were condemned to everlaſting puniſhments, for doing what they did: For they perſiſted in this teſtimony to the very laſt; and if it were a lye, they went out of the world with that horrible lye in their mouths. Horrible indeed! Since it was not bearing falſe witneſs in an ordinary caſe, between man and man, but bearing falſe witneſs of the great and glorious GOD; in that they teſtified he raiſed up *Jeſus Chriſt* from the dead, and gave them power and commiſſion to preach that doctrine to the world: All which, upon this *Hypotheſis*, were notorious untruths. And therefore they could have no hope of finding mercy and forgiveneſs at his hands; becauſe, whatever encouragements are given by either of theſe religions or repenting ſinners, there is nothing but wrath and indignation threatned, as the portion of thoſe who continue obſtinate and impenitent. From whence it muſt follow, that, if they aſſerted and ſtood in ſo vile a falſhood, in contradiction to laws ſo very expreſs and ſe-

ſevere, as theſe and many more to the ſame purpoſe are; and this too, in a caſe of ſo great and important a nature, wherein the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind were ſo deeply concerned, they could be no other than downright *Atheiſts*; men that had no regard to God, or any notions of his laws; no ſenſe of right and wrong, or vertue and vice; but perſons of the moſt depraved tempers and principles imaginable; and in a word, ſuch whom no time or age of the world ever could pretend to match for conſummate impiety.

SECT. XXXII.

NOW, that they were not men of ſuch looſe and degenerate principles, is evident from this conſideration eſpecially, *viz. That had they been ſuch, they would never have given mankind ſuch notions of God Almighty, nor taught ſuch rules of duty and behaviour, both towards him and the reſt of their fellow-creatures, as they did.*

For why ſhould men, who were ſo remote from any religious ſenſe of God themſelves, be ſo very zealous and induſtrious to impreſs it upon the minds of others; and teach them to love and fear him, with ſo much care and exactneſs, as the ſcope of all their ſermons and writings ſhews us plainly they made it their buſineſs to do?

Can there be any thing more lovely than their deſcriptions of the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy; and the preparations made to render thoſe, who are truly pious and good, compleatly happy after this life? Can there be any thing more terrible, than what they have denounced of the Divine Juſtice and Vengeance againſt Sinners?

Let

Let us but conſider the awful ſolemnities of a judgment-day, the final ſeparation of the good from the bad, with the impartial diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments, ſo often talked of in the Goſpel. Did they not tell the world by theſe Doctrines, that God is juſt and holy, as well as bountiful and good; and that he is not to be trifled with, tho' he infinitely values the eaſe and happineſs of his creatures? They repreſented him, as the ſearcher of the thoughts and counſels of the heart, and of purer eyes than to behold the leaſt iniquity; tho' of ſo much grace and condeſcenſion, as to accept of ſincerity, and even to be pleaſed to dwell with the *humble* and *contrite ſpirit*. They preſſed it at his will and pleaſure, that men ſhould deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and holily here: That they ſhould be fruitful in good works, and enjoying this world as if they enjoyed it not, have their affections and converſations in Heaven. In ſhort, that they ſhould govern themſelves by the exacteſt rules of integrity, juſtice, temperance and charity, paying love and due regard to all; yea, ſeeking the good of all, and even recompenſing good for evil to the worſt of enemies; that ſo, by the practice of theſe virtues, they might ſhew forth the divine purity and benignity, and prove themſelves to be the children of God.

Now I leave it to any man to judge, whether *Atheiſm* and *forlorn impiety* would ever have produced ſuch ſort of doctrines and precepts as theſe are. Men that had been wicked enough to forge a religion, and publiſh it in God's Name; would alſo have been wiſe enough to have made up their ſyſtem after another ſort of manner: For it was wholly at their own choice, to make whatever they pleaſed of it at firſt; but why they ſhould make ſuch a thing of it as they have, is was what no ſenſe can ever account for. A *profane*, *irreligious diſpoſition* could never poſſibly diſpoſe men to talk of God, and

to recommend vertue and piety with that ardour and concern which they do. And to clog a *new invention* with ſuch duties, ſuch commands, and ſuch threatnings, as we find their writings abound with; was not at all the way to make it grateful and palatable to the corrupt affections of mankind. Nor could ſuch rules of living and behaviour, as they enjoyned, ever poſſibly ſerve to promote the intereſt of vice, or to make men looſe and irregular; had they had any ſuch intention as that. For theſe rules are actually calculated for the ſuppreſſion of vice and wickedneſs; and where they take place, ſo that mens tempers and manners are duly influenced by them, it is plain they are made what we muſt call vertuous and good; that is, they are fitted and diſpoſed to behave themſelves as reaſonable creatures ought to do, both towards God, and towards their neighbour; and to manage their own converſations decently and ſoberly in the world.

So that they could neither gratify their own humour, nor pleaſe and flatter the world, nor obtain any wicked purpoſes upon mankind, by putting their religion into ſuch a dreſs as this. And therefore, from the very matter and ſcope of the goſpel, I conclude, *That the firſt writers and preachers of it could not be men of wicked and irreligious principles or deſigns; becauſe, I ſay, they could have no poſſible end,* upon that ſuppoſition, *in doing what they did.* And to make them act without ſome end, is to make them machines, and not men.

SECT. XXXIII.

Eleventhly, IT is plain to a demonſtration, *That theſe perſons heartily believed the Doctrines they preached to the world.*

The proof of this ariſes from the conſideration *of the dangers and ſufferings they expoſed themſelves to upon that*

that score; which, I judge, will be sufficient to clear the point to all that are not obstinately bent to think just the reverse of what the generality of mankind must and will conclude in a case of this nature. For is it not an argument that men are in good earnest, when they dare venture upon torments, and death itself, to confirm what they say? I would fain know, what motives an *impostor*, placed in such circumstances as the Apostles were, can possibly have to persuade him to run upon such extremities in the defence of what he knows to be a notorious lye. I grant, indeed, that a man quite lost to all sense of vertue and goodness, and given up to reprobate and licentious principles, may possibly bid defiance to some dangers in the way of maintaining a notion he knows to be false; provided, at the same time, he has a fair prospect of gaining some very considerable profit, or reputation and honour by it. And the reason is plain; for such a one, *having no fear of punishment in a future state, and being possessed with a mighty opinion of the present world*, may be induced to run some hazards in order to the obtaining those advantages, which appear so very great and charming to him. But even such a man as this would certainly stop at hazards, and not think it worth his while to run upon unavoidable destruction in such a cause. * For when life is gone, all is gone with him: And tho' he has no evil to dread, yet, on the other hand, he has no good to expect. And the laws of human nature are so strong and binding in this case, *that no man can ever persuade himself to be willing to exchange a state of good he is in actual possession of, for a state wherein he assures himself he shall not be in a capacity to relish either good or evil.* Upon which account, I believe, I may securely challenge any one to produce out of

* Τίς γὰρ φιλήδονος καὶ ἀκρατὴς δυναίτο ἂν θάνατον ἀσπάζεσθαι ὅπως τῶν αὐτοῦ ἀγαθῶν στερηθῇ. Just. Mart.

any age or hiſtory of the world, a ſingle inſtance of a perſon, *not lunatick or diſtracted*, who ever carried the jeſt ſo far, as to throw away reputation, fortune, pleaſure, and life itſelf, to propagate a cheat, which there was undeniable proof that he himſelf owned and knew to be ſo. The caſe is quite otherwiſe with reſpect to ſuch perſons, *who*, howſoever deceived and prejudiced, *firmly believing their Opinions to be true*, make no ſcruple to expoſe themſelves to the worſt extremities in the defence of them. For the *Schemes* they have formed to themſelves, furniſh them with notions that tend to their comfort and ſupport; and tho' other people think them groſly deluded, yet they may pleaſe themſelves with the hopes of an after-recompence for what they go thro' here. But a known, wilful *Impoſtor* can have no *Scheme*, no principles that he dare venture out of this world upon, as long as it is in his power to keep in it; and therefore he will never be bold enough to act ſuch a part as the firſt preachers of the *Chriſtian Faith* did, who had a thouſand terrors and deaths in proſpect every day, and at laſt ſealed their teſtimony with their blood.

Now this being the caſe, and it being evidently made out before, that the Apoſtles could not be men of profane and irreligious principles; but, on the contrary, as appears both by their doctrine and their manners, perſons of moſt devout and ſerious minds; no reaſonable man can avoid making this concluſion, *That their judgments were thorowly convinced of the truth of what they delivered, and their hearts, as well as their tongues, were engaged in that work.* And therefore now we have but one thing more to enquire into with reſpect to their Characters; and that is, Whether there be ſufficient grounds to believe, *that they were men of competent natural underſtanding, and were not acted by principles of whimſy and Enthuſiaſm; but had a free command of their minds, by which they could manage themſelves coolly and ſoberly,*

berly, as other men might do. For when this point is likewiſe cleared, we ſhall have laid together all the *Data* which are neceſſary in order to argue with ſtrength and advantage upon the teſtimony they gave concerning the *Reſurrection of* Jeſus Chriſt.

Therefore——

SECT. XXXIV.

Twelfthly, AND Laſtly, *As theſe perſons were no* Impoſtors, *ſo neither were they fooliſh and ſtupid, or enthuſiaſtical and diſtracted; ſo that the Teſtimony they delivered ſhould fall under any manner of ſuſpicion upon either of thoſe accounts.*

I take it for granted, that the way to determine whether a perſon be a *fool* or a *lunatick*, is to conſider his words and ſpeeches, his actions and deportment, and ſee whether they come up to that ſtandard of ſobriety and good underſtanding, which is commonly allowed of amongſt mankind, and by which men are ordinarily judged, to be either ſenſible and in their right wits, or elſe to be otherwiſe. And therefore, if, upon a careful examination of what paſſed of this nature amongſt the Apoſtles, we find nothing but what will fairly ſtand the teſt; we ſhall be obliged, by all our common practice, and notions of things and perſons, to pronounce, that they were neither *Idiots* nor *Madmen*; but were at leaſt ſo far the contrary as was neceſſary, in order to prevent any objections that might be ſtarted againſt their Doctrine upon that ſcore. Let us therefore put the queſtion, *Did theſe men ever do, or ſay any thing, which betrayed a conſtitution, that might juſtly be ſuſpected of any defects of this kind?*

Are not their diſcourſes grave and well compoſed, full of life and perſuaſive eloquence; tho' without elaborate art and ſtudy?

Did they not converſe with, preach to, and diſpute amongſt all ſorts of people, even the moſt learned and polite, as well as the rude and ignorant? And was not this the way for fools and madmen to diſcover themſelves, and let the world ſee what they were? It is much, that no perſon, amongſt all thoſe crouds of *Jews*, *Romans*, *Greeks*, and others, which daily ſurrounded them in the diſcharge of their office, ſhould have ſenſe and ſagacity enough to find out their weak ſide; and by expoſing the idleneſs and incoherence of their talk, repreſent them as ſubjects only for mirth and diverſion to the reſt of mankind. Inſtead of this, we find that they expoſed the follies and errors of their moſt learned adverſaries to their very faces; and that in ſuch a manner, as left them no room to anſwer or defend themſelves. If at any time they undertook an argument, they managed it with ſuch ſucceſs, that thoſe they had to do with either changed their Opinions, and fairly owned their judgments convinced; or elſe, by their furious reſentments, expreſſed in the way of railing, ſlandering, and raiſing mobs, plainly ſhewed that they had been gravelled, and reduced to the laſt diſtreſs. And what wonderful effects had their ſermons upon the minds of men? At the ſame time that they delivered their doctrines with a ſuperior authority and command, they touched the ſofteſt paſſions of human nature, and made ſuch alterations in the tempers and lives of their auditors, the moſt of whom heard them with a ſufficient degree of prejudice, that it may well be ſaid of them, *Never men ſpake like theſe.* Never did any *Philoſopher*, *Orator*, or *Rhetorician* ſpeak to ſuch purpoſe: Never had wit and learning ſuch prodigious triumphs as the plainneſs and ſimplicity of theſe preachers. But as plain as they were, theſe things evidently ſhew, *that they neither raved, nor talked nonſenſe to thoſe about them.* For if it would not require clear and cool heads for men to behave themſelves at the rate they did, it is impoſſible to think

think what Deportment could ever require ſuch a Temper. So that upon the whole, no Man that knows how to judge of ſober Senſe and Capacity, by the common Rules of the World, can ever queſtion whether theſe Men were well qualify'd, even in that reſpect, for the work they were employ'd in.

SECT. XXXV.

THUS we have enquired pretty largely into the *Characters* and *Qualifications* of thoſe Perſons who ſet up for publick Witneſſes of the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*. Let us now ſee what Uſe is to be made of what has been ſaid.

The *Chriſtians* therefore proceed to argue from theſe Particulars after the following manner.

Firſt, They ſay, *This Teſtimony of the Apoſtles concerning the* Reſurrection of Chriſt, *has all the plain Marks and Characters of Truth and Sincerity that any Human Teſtimony can poſſibly have.*

The Vertue and Probity of theſe Men was beyond all Diſpute. They were ignorant of the World, and unacquainted with the Methods of wheedling and Intrigue; yet they diſcovered neither Folly nor Lunacy in their Behaviour. They went againſt all the Prejudices of Education, and the Laws of worldly Intereſt. They never contradicted each other in their Accounts, or ſhrunk from their Teſtimony for Fear or Favour. They were fair and open in all their Proceedings, and had no Followers but thoſe whom a convinced Judgment made to be ſo. They referred their Hearers to Time, Place, Perſons, and all other Circumſtances that could poſſibly make for their Satisfaction. In a word, what they teſtified was not a Matter of Tradition, but of Senſe and Experience; and as they loſt the preſent World, ſo they

they laid Eternity itſelf at Stake upon the Truth of their Teſtimony.

SECT. XXXVI.

NOW the Caſe lies here: Since it is demonſtrated in general, at SECT. III, IV, V, VI. PART II. *That we are obliged to aſſent to ſome Things as true, in Caſes where we have neither Senſe nor rigorous abſtracted Demonſtration to aſſure us of the Truth of them:* Alſo ſince it is ſhewn, PROP. III. PART II. *That Teſtimony may be ſo circumſtantiated, as to afford us a ſufficient degree of juſt and rational Security, that things are really ſo as they are preſented to us:* And again, at PROP. VIII. *That our Aſſent in many of theſe Caſes may be, and is attended with as little Doubt and Heſitation, as in thoſe where we have perfect and rigorous Demonſtration for the Truth of Things:* Since theſe Things are ſo, the Queſtion is, *Why ſhould any Man refuſe his Aſſent in the preſent Caſe, or what valuable Reaſons can be produced for not admitting the Proof here offered as juſt and ſufficient?*

Is there any Circumſtance relating to the Account given by the Apoſtles that renders it liable to a reaſonable Suſpicion?

Is there any one Circumſtance wanting which was ever required by Mankind in this ſort of Proof? Should we look into the Practice of Nations, even the moſt polite and beſt taught in the World, we ſhall find that their utmoſt demands in all matters concerning *Witneſſes* and *Teſtimony* fall vaſtly ſhort of what the Caſe in hand furniſhes us withal. Nay, it is evident without further Proof, than only comparing what has been already ſaid with plain matter of Fact abroad in the World, *That amongſt all the vaſt variety of Caſes, wherein Teſtimony is ever made uſe of; there is no Caſe wherein there is ſuch a Concurrence of weighty and undeniable Circumſtances*

ſtances to perſuade the Truth of a Thing as there is here.

What then ſhall we ſay? There can be no Objection, that will hold, drawn from any Topick that relates to the Characters or Management of theſe Witneſſes; and it is abſurd and irrational to reject their Teſtimony upon a bare *Phyſical Poſſibility of Deception*, by PROP. XII. PART II. And *Laſtly*, by PROP. IX. of the ſame, *The Subject being of ſuch a nature as admits only of Moral Proof, altho' it be of the greateſt Moment and Conſequence poſſible; yet we are not to make that a Reaſon for refuſing our Aſſent to ſuch Proof alledged for it, as has all the Conditions ever required or made neceſſary by common Conſent and the Laws of the World, in order to our firm Belief and Acquieſcency in ſuch a Thing as true.*

And therefore the *Chriſtians* conclude here, *That if their Adverſaries will not admit this Teſtimony, it is becauſe they are governed by Humour and Self-will:* They will not, becauſe they will not; or becauſe they have Reaſons to themſelves, ſuch as can never ſtand the Teſt of a fair and impartial Examination, for their doing otherwiſe.

And this is indeed what muſt ever be ſuſpected to be the true State of the Caſe, and what lies at the Bottom of all the Controverſy between them and the *Chriſtians*.

SECT. XXXVII.

BUT, *Secondly*, they ſay, *That to diſown ſuch a Teſtimony as this, is, by Conſequence, to take away the Validity of all* Moral Evidence.

Now by what has been ſhewn, in various Particulars, at PART II. it is certain and clear, beyond all diſpute, *That this ſort of Evidence is not to be taken away, nor the World ever to be brought to that paſs, that Men ſhall admit of*

of nothing as true but what they have ſenſible or demonſtrative Proof for. And therefore our Buſineſs is to ſee whether any ſuch Conſequence will follow from the diſowning a Teſtimony attended with ſuch Circumſtances as that which we are now ſpeaking of: For if it does, then I think there will ſcarce be room for any farther arguing upon the Matter.

Now that ſuch a Conſequence will follow, is thus plainly made out from what was hinted occaſionally in the foregoing *Section*. For if no Caſe occurring in human Life and Affairs, wherein we are neceſſarily obliged to aſſent to Things as true, be ever attended with Circumſtances more conſiderable, both for Number and Quality, than this Caſe is; then to diſown moral Proof in this Caſe, will infer a Neceſſity of diſowning it in all others.

But the former is true; and therefore the latter.

There can be but two ways in Nature to overthrow this Reaſoning. The one by ſhewing that there are Caſes wherein we aſſent to the Truth of Things, as made out to us by *Moral Proof*; the Circumſtances of which are ſuperior, in both reſpects mentioned, to thoſe of the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*.

The other, by ſhewing, that altho' it ſhould be granted that there are no ſuch Caſes to be produced; yet that it will not follow, that to reject the Proof in the Caſe here alledged will infer a Neceſſity of doing it in all others which are to be made out by the ſame ſort of Proof.

It is indifferent to me which end of the Argument the incredulous Gentlemen pleaſe to take.

If they can ſhew any Caſe, or Caſes, which has more Advantage in Point of Circumſtances than this, I allow then that it will not follow, *That to diſown* Moral Proof *in this Caſe, will infer a Neceſſity of diſowning it in all others.* Becauſe a ſuperiour Evidence may be admitted, when an inferior one is rejected. However, even ſuppoſing

poſing they could prove this; yet thus much will follow ſtill, viz. *That* Moral Evidence *muſt be diſowned in all Caſes whoſe Circumſtances were but equal to thoſe of the Caſe in hand, and much more in thoſe whoſe Circumſtances were leſs conſiderable.* And theſe are ſo many, that I make no ſcruple to ſay, *That all Society and Commerce amongſt Mankind would be totally deſtroy'd, were* Moral Evidence *to be rejected but in a very ſmall Number of them:* Nay, were *Moral Proof* to be diſowned but in ſuch Caſes where the Circumſtances had not the hundredth part of the Advantage which thoſe of the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt* have been ſhewn to have, it might be demonſtrated *that no Buſineſs, Government, or Converſation could be any where maintained or carried on in the World.* So that this Point, if it were poſſible to be gained, would ſignify but little.

As for the other, viz. *The Sequel of the Argument*, I gueſs there may be ſome good Reaſons why that ſhould paſs without any Moleſtation, or attempt to diſprove the Truth of it. And indeed it would be an Undertaking very wonderful and odd, for a Man to endeavour to ſhew, *That tho' there are no ſuch ſuperiour Caſes to be produced; yet it will not follow, that to diſown the Proof in the Caſe here alledged, will infer a Neceſſity of doing it in all others which are to be made out by the ſame kind of Proof.* For the plain Engliſh of this is, *I will not have it ſo, and therefore it ſhall not be ſo*—— *I allow the Antecedent, but it is not for my Turn to grant the Conſequence.*

This, indeed, puts an end to all Argument; and a Man that is come ſo far, muſt be complimented with the Character of *Invincible.*

SECT. XXXVIII.

AND thus much may ſuffice for this firſt Head of Argument. However, before I enter on a ſecond, I think it expedient to clear one Point by the way, relating

relating to the Matter or Subject of the Apoſtles Teſtimony, which was a *Reſurrection from the Dead*; a Thing not only ſtrange, but impoſſible to be effected by any mere natural Power. It is not my Province here to enter upon any Diſcourſe of a *Reſurrection* in general, or to ſhew the Folly and Blunders of the common Objections that are ſtarted againſt it. May thoſe People who amuſe themſelves and others with idle prating of Contradictions and ſimple Impoſſibilities in this Caſe, come to a better Underſtanding, and learn to think more juſtly and decently of the infinite Wiſdom and Power of their Maker. My Concern is with the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; which, according to the Accounts of the *New Teſtament*, was the third Day after his Death and Burial. And as the *Chriſtians* believe his Body ſaw no Corruption, and the *Deiſts* will not pretend to prove it did; ſo the Caſe is clogged with no other Difficulty, than barely that of his being reſtored to Life again. And I believe it will be much at one to theſe Gentlemen, whether the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt* did, or did not, ſee Corruption; if it be ſo that the Apoſtles ſpoke Truth in ſaying he roſe from the Dead.

Now what I would offer here is this, *viz. That tho' the Matter of this Teſtimony were of the moſt wonderful and ſurprizing Nature; nay, a Thing utterly impoſſible for any mere* Phyſical Agent *to bring about; yet this is not, in right Reaſon, any juſt Ground for a Man's refuſing to give Credit to it.* I gueſs the Matter may ſtick pretty much hereabouts, and therefore I ſhall endeavour to ſet this *Propoſition* in a very clear Light.

For this End I muſt beg theſe Gentlemen's Attention to the following Particulars, and the Argument deduced from them.

SECT.

SECT. XXXIX.

First, *THE thing here spoken of, was infinitely easy for an Almighty Power to effect.*

Secondly, *There is no Medium or Principle, by which it can be shewn antecedently that it was inconsistent with, or any way unbecoming the Divine Perfections, for God to raise* Jesus Christ *from the Dead.*

As for the *First* of these, I conclude they will not make any words about it; because, how strange soever the thing be in itself, or however impossible to any second Cause, yet it is not of such a kind as does in its own Nature involve any thing of *Absurdity* and *Contradiction.* The Case of raising a person from the Dead, or of re-animating a dead Body, does not amount to that of making a thing to be and not to be at the same time; nor does it imply or infer any thing that can ever be reduced thereto. So that these Persons have no room or pretence to object, that this Effect is to be reckoned amongst those, which even Almighty Power itself cannot bring to pass †. Tho', by the way, I must say, we ought to be very cautious when we talk of Impossibilities to God; as remembring that many of those things, which are impossible to our utmost Power to effect, and to all our Sagacity and Penetration to conceive the Nature or Manner of, are very possible and easy with him.

† Τὸ μὲν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὡς ἔστιν ἀρκοῦσα πρὸς τὴν τῶν σωμάτων ἀνάστασιν, δείκνυσιν ἡ τούτων αὐτῶν γένεσις. Athenag. de Mort. Resurrect. *pag.* 151. Edit. Oxon, 1706. *And the same again,* pag. 155. *where he argues from the Divine Power and Wisdom.*

SECT.

SECT. XL.

Secondly, *THERE is no poſſible Medium by which it can be ſhewn that it was any way unbecoming the Perfections of the infinite God to raiſe* Jeſus Chriſt *from the Dead.*

That either God's *Holineſs*, *Juſtice*, *Wiſdom*, *Mercy*, *Goodneſs*, or *Truth*, muſt, or ought to have been a bar againſt this Work.

The old *Chriſtians* reaſoned after this manner upon the Subject of a *Reſurrection* in general; and I may as well apply it to the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt* in particular; arguing with † *Athenagoras*, if God would not do this Work, it muſt be becauſe it was ſome way or other *unjuſt and unworthy of him.*

I grant, indeed, if it could be fairly prov'd that the *Chriſtian Religion* were an Inſtitution unworthy of God; that then it might be demonſtrated *à priori*, that *Jeſus Chriſt* could not be raiſed from the Dead to authorize ſuch a Religion in the World; becauſe upon this *Hypotheſis* it muſt have been a mere *Impoſture*, and therefore impoſſible ever to have had any Countenance from Heaven. But ſince the Religion itſelf is ſo far from being contrary to the Nature of God, that it is manifeſtly moſt agreeable to all his Perfections, as diſcover'd to us *by the Light of Nature, and the Government of the World*; it is plain that no ſuch Demonſtration can ever be formed. And therefore I preſume we argue rightly, that there is no antecedent Concluſion to be drawn from any of the Divine Attributes againſt the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

† Τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον, ἢ ὡς ἄδικον αὐτῷ ἐστιν ἀδύνατον, ἢ ὡς ἀδύξειον, &c. Athenag. *pag.* 168.

SECT.

SECT. XLI.

NOW from hence ariſes the proof of the propoſition.

For were the caſe put concerning the credibility of any effect in general, pretended to be wrought by ſome certain cauſe or agent; if it were demonſtrable that this effect were vaſtly ſhort of what the virtue and power of the cauſe could produce; if it were demonſtrable that no reaſons *à priori* could be given to ſhew that this cauſe ſhould not, or ought not to produce ſuch an effect: And laſtly, If there were plain and poſitive teſtimony, unexceptionable in all other reſpects, aſſerting, that this effect was actually and really produced; there would be no juſt and valuable reaſons remaining for any man's disbelief in ſuch a caſe. And therefore, how much ſoever this effect might be above the power of any cauſes of an inferior rank, it would be notoriouſly abſurd and irrational, upon that ſcore, to reject the evidence, atteſting the actual production of it, by that other and more powerful cauſe.

I need not make a formal application of this to the caſe in hand; for every body will ſee, that it muſt hold with as much reaſon here, where the effect ſpoken of is the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Agent concerned an Infinite and Almighty Being: This conſideration being likewiſe taken into the account, *That it is impoſſible to ſhew why infinite Power ſhould not have been engaged in this work; and that it is a palpable begging of the queſtion to ſuppoſe any ſuch thing, without firſt demonſtrating* Chriſtianity *to be an* Impoſture. And this, I hope, may be ſufficient to make out that it is abſurd and unreaſonable, and a manifeſt breach of the laws of good arguing, to make the ſtrangeneſs of the thing teſtified by the Apoſtles a reaſon for rejecting

the teſtimony itſelf. And this conſideration, added to thoſe which went before, will compleat the firſt argument.

SECT. XLII.

Secondly, ANother head of argument which the *Chriſtians* go upon is that *of the certain and neceſſary diſcovery of the fraud*, if the teſtimony given by the Apoſtles concerning the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt* had been falſe.

If it be asked how they prove, *That the cheat muſt needs have been diſcovered, if ſo be this account of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *had not been a real truth, but a mere forgery of the Apoſtles:* I reply, they give the following reaſons for it; which, all put together, will manifeſtly infer what they ſay. They argue therefore,

Firſt, That the Apoſtles did immediately declare the thing.

Secondly, That they made this declaration upon the very ſpot where the thing was pretended to be done.

Thirdly, That they did not whiſper the matter, but proclaimed it in the moſt open and publick manner that was poſſible.

Fourthly, That they did not begin to make this report in ſome ſecret corner, but in one of the moſt famous and publick places of any in the world at that time.

Fifthly, That they made choice of ſuch a ſeaſon, wherein there was the greateſt concourſe and reſort of all ſorts of People thither; and therefore the greateſt number of hearers, and enquirers into what they affirmed.

Sixthly, That the profeſſed adverſaries of this doctrine had many urgent and weighty reaſons to perſuade them to make their utmoſt efforts for the proving it falſe.

Se-

Seventhly, That they had as much time and opportunity as could ever be deſired, in order to the diſcovery of the *Impoſture*, if there had been any.

Eighthly, That they had likewiſe power in their hands, by which they were enabled to examine all perſons and things which might any way conduce to the giving them Light into the matter.

As for the truth of theſe particulars, the *Chriſtians* believe their adverſaries themſelves are ſo thorowly apprized of it, or at leaſt are ſenſible that there are no objections to be made in the caſe but what would be plainly ſcandalous for men that pretend to Reaſon to make, that they have little apprehenſion of any diſpute ariſing from that ſcore. And indeed, I think, thoſe Gentlemen with all their heat againſt *Chriſtianity*, have hitherto been ſo prudent, and ſo juſt to themſelves, as never to venture ſolemnly to call any of theſe matters into queſtion: Nor do I believe that any of them will ever think it worth their while ſo to do; eſpecially ſince there is ſo profound a ſilence as to theſe points amongſt all the more antient enemies of the *Chriſtian Religion*; none of whom, that I could ever hear of, made the leaſt doubt whether the circumſtances were really ſo or no.

SECT XLIII.

NOW the Queſtion which ariſes here is this, *viz. Whether ſome teſtimony concerning matter of fact may not be attended with ſuch circumſtances, that if that teſtimony be falſe it ſhould be morally impoſſible but the falſhood ſhould be diſcovered?*

If it be denied that any teſtimony of matter of fact may be attended with ſuch circumſtances, then it is asked, *What there is in the nature of things, according to the preſent conſtitution and eſtabliſhment of the World, that*

ſhould be a reaſon why ſome caſes of humane teſtimony may not be thus circumſtantiated?

Thoſe that affirm there are ſuch reaſons, are obliged to ſhew them: The *Chriſtians* ſay there can be no ſuch.

If it be granted that ſome teſtimony concerning matter of fact may be attended with ſuch circumſtances, *That if that teſtimony be falſe, it ſhould be morally impoſſible but the falſhood ſhould be detected*; then here are theſe two queſtions farther, to which a diſtinct anſwer is required.

Firſt, *What are the qualifications or conditions neceſſary to render a teſtimony ſuch as is here ſpoken of?*

Secondly, *What does this particular teſtimony concerning the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *want of thoſe neceſſary conditions or qualifications?* If it wants any, ſhew what they are; if it does not, then aſſign ſome reaſons why you believe, *That there were all the conditions requiſite to render the diſcovery of the fraud morally neceſſary and certain, and yet that it was not actually diſcovered.*

SECT. XLIV.

IN the mean time, depending upon the force of the circumſtances mentioned, we lay down this concluſion, *viz. That there was in this caſe a concurrence of all ſuch circumſtances as are in the nature of the thing neceſſary and conducible to the laying of a cheat open to the world, and not only ſo, but they were ſuch as would have rendred the diſcovery of the fraud unavoidable, if there had been any to be diſcovered.* And we are the more confirmed in this concluſion upon theſe two accounts.

Firſt, Becauſe the common and conſtant experience of the world ſhews, *That fraudulent intrigues and cheats are actually diſcovered in caſes, where the advantages for laying them open bear no proportion to what we find in the caſe of our* Saviour's Reſurrection.

Se-

Secondly, Becauſe *the* Deiſts *cannot give an inſtance of an* Impoſture, *ſet afoot in any age of the World, and attended with circumſtances of equal moment to theſe, which ever yet eſcaped being diſcovered.*

So that the reſult of the argument amounts to thus much.

Firſt, That there is the *higheſt degree of moral Impoſſibility* that the teſtimony given by the Apoſtles concerning the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* ſhould have been a falſe one.

Now what grounds we have for ſecurity in all caſes of this nature, where we argue, for Example, *that it is morally impoſſible that ſuch or ſuch a Thing ſhould ever be, or come to paſs*, has been abundantly ſhewn at PROP. II. PART II. to which I refer. And therefore, the ſtreſs of the argument reſting mainly there, I am under no doubt at all of the intrinſic goodneſs and ſufficiency of it. Nor, indeed, is there room left for any other diſpute in the caſe, than, *Whether Mankind be led by ſuch and ſuch Principles, or be governed by ſuch and ſuch Laws, when they act as reaſonable and ſociable creatures, yea or no?* Which is a queſtion that, I hope, may eaſily be decided.

Secondly, That ſince the reaſons, why we aſſert it was morally impoſſible in the higheſt degree that this teſtimony ſhould be falſe, are plainly deduced from the very nature of the Caſe itſelf, and, moreover, backed with experience and evident *Matter of Fact*; the *Deiſts* will be obliged to coin a ſet of new Principles, in order to give a fair and diſtinct anſwer to what the *Chriſtians* urge upon this head.

For to do it upon any principles hitherto received amongſt mankind, they will find not only *Morally*, but *Phyſically* impoſſible: And I gueſs the difficulty will not be leſs for them to invent and introduce *new Principles* in their ſtead, ſuch as the World will think fit to ſubmit to. However, what remains for them to do, is either to invent *new Principles*, or elſe to ſolve

the buſineſs by thoſe hitherto received amongſt mankind; which are tasks pretty nearly equal to one another.

SECT XLV.

Thirdly, A Third Topick which the *Chriſtians* argue upon is, *The demonſtrable Conviction which the* Jewiſh *nation lay under at that Time that* Jeſus Chriſt *was really riſen again.*

The Conſequence of this Argument lies here, viz. That if a body of people, who were the Murderers of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the avowed enemies of his Religion; who had ſo many reaſons to wiſh he might not riſe again, ſo many intereſts concerned to engage them to hinder mankind from believing that he was riſen again; and laſtly, who had all advantages in their hands that could be deſired to inform and aſſure themſelves whether he was riſen again or no: If theſe perſons gave plain proofs of their being convicted of the truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, the reſt of mankind can have no rational pretence for the leaſt doubt or ſcruple about it. And the reaſon is, becauſe no part of mankind beſides can ever poſſibly have either the *Motives* or the *Advantages* for enquiring into the matter that the *Jewiſh* nation had. Therefore their conviction is a juſt argument to us.

SECT XLVI.

NOW it is eaſy to ſhew, upon plain and obvious principles, *That the* Jews *were infallibly convinced of the* Reſurrection of Chriſt.

In order to this, I ſuppoſe it will be granted, *That when two parties of men ſtand at the higheſt degree of oppoſition*

oppoſition to each other, if the one aſſerts and publiſhes a matter of fact, which is of the higheſt moment, and abſolutely deſtructive of the intereſts of the other, and is not ſo palpably falſe as to carry the plain marks of ſpite and revenge, or ſtudied ſlander and ſcandal along with it; that then, if that other party, upon whom this charge is made, does not in as ſolemn and publick manner refute that charge, or do ſomething in their own vindication, which, in the judgments of Perſons not biaſſed or prejudiced either way, ſhall bear ſome proportion to the attack made upon them: That then, I ſay, they tacitly acknowledge the truth of what the accuſing party alledge againſt them, and ſo by conſequence give up the cauſe.

For the reaſon of this, I refer to what is diſcourſed at the latter end of PROP. II.

Now the caſe lies here: The writers of the goſpel-hiſtory did, in expreſs terms, publiſh to the world, *That the* Jews *bribed the Soilders to report, that the body of* Jeſus Chriſt *was ſtolen away by his Diſciples.*

This was a home charge; and ſuch as, if true, ſhewed the *Jews* to be the moſt degenerate wretches under Heaven.

For here they trampled upon all the obligations of conſcience and religion, and ſet themſelves to fight againſt Truth, and even againſt God himſelf, that they might carry on their prejudices againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the *new Religion* inſtituted by him.

Now for the Evangeliſts to record it in their hiſtory, and that but a very little time too after *Chriſt*'s death, that the *Jews* were guilty of this horrid and abominable piece of *Forgery* and *Bribery*; to tell the world that they acted ſo foul and ſo horrid a part as to tamper with the Soldiers, and put them upon ſpreading about a thing which they knew in their own hearts to be a notorious lye: This was to paint them out to the world in the very worſt colours that men could be painted in, and would

expoſe the cauſe they maintained, as deſperate and forlorn to the laſt degree.

Now that this charge was neither ſo evidently falſe as to carry its own refutation along with it, nor yet the effect of ſpleen and revenge becauſe the *Jews* had crucified *Jeſus Chriſt*, will be apparent to all people that will but uſe their underſtandings as they ought to do, in looking over the circumſtances of the caſe, and the *Jews* management upon this occaſion.

The thing, as recorded by the hiſtorian *Matthew*, was thus.

The watch, who were ſet to guard the ſepulchre of Chriſt, *being terrified by the awful appearance of the angel of God, and the earthquake which attended his deſcent from Heaven, come into the city, and tell the chief prieſts what things had paſſed.* Upon this a council was immediately called, and finding themſelves under a preſſing neceſſity of ſtopping theſe ſoldiers mouths, they reſolved to try the power of money for that purpoſe: The reaſon of which, in all probability, was becauſe thoſe men were *Romans*; for otherwiſe, it is no breach of charity to ſuppoſe, that that aſſembly could have made bold with the law of *Moſes* in a caſe of extremity, and found other ways to diſpoſe of men that were like to tell dangerous truth, if they could have ventured the *civil* conſequences of ſo doing.

However, they propoſed the reward to them, and told them what they were to do for it: *Say ye, his diſciples came by night and ſtole him away while we ſlept.* Very odd directions to be given by a council of doctors and heads of the people! Sure they muſt be under ſome terrible conſternation, and their wits perfectly confuſed, to put a parcel of men upon giving the world a formal account of what was done while they were faſt aſleep! But if this advice of theirs was wiſe, that which followed next was every whit as honeſt and pious: *And if this come to the governour's Ears, we will perſuade him*

him, and ſecure you: That is, Do you tell the lie roundly, and we will juſtify you in it, and back what you ſay; ſo that the governour, if he ſhould enquire, ſhall be effectually cheated and abuſed, and you come to no manner of damage. And this, as the hiſtorian tells us, did the buſineſs. The men, thus tempted, and thus ſecured from danger, yielded not only to conceal the truth, but alſo to ſet about a contrary ſtory: *They took the money, and did as they were taught.* Nor was it any wonder that people of their profeſſion ſhould be charmed with a large bribe, eſpecially being wheedled by an aſſembly of grave and learned men; who would ſay a thouſand things to them (and it being in their own defence, to be ſure they did) to work off the apprehenſions they had conceived upon the ſurprizing things they ſaw at the ſepulchre.

This is the account of the matter: And therefore the next thing to be enquired into is, *What defence the* Jews *made againſt this heavy charge.*

Any indifferent perſon that ſhould hear the caſe, would conclude no leſs than that the whole nation, a people that prided themſelves in character ſo much as they did, ſhould have been in a tumult upon it: At leaſt, that the chief prieſts and fathers of *Iſrael* ſhould have exerted themſelves after ſome very extraordinary manner to clear themſelves of this aſperſion, being the perſons who ſuffered moſt deeply by it.

And certainly there were very valuable reaſons for their ſo doing: For beſides that their cauſe and religion lay at ſtake, and this account of their proceedings was ſure to be publiſhed thro' the world, and tranſmitted even to the lateſt poſterity, the party which made this aſſault upon them, was too conſiderable to be deſpiſed, and not counted worthy of an anſwer; tho', at the ſame time, neither their principles nor their circumſtances in the world were ſuch as could ſtrike their adverſaries with any dread or fear of them, ſo that they ſhould forbear doing themſelves juſtice upon that ſcore. One

One would expect therefore to have heard, that the *Chriſtians* were ſolemnly called to an account for this provoking piece of hiſtory: That they were challenged to make it good, with all that zeal and concern, which injured innocence, in a people of ſuch reſentments as the *Jews* were, would naturally have inſpired: That perſons and records were appealed to and examined, and the matter preſſed ſo cloſe, that the *Chriſtians* ſhould have been obliged to make out to the world what grounds they had for affirming ſuch a thing. Such ſtirring, and ſuch endeavours as theſe, would have been but what the caſe well deſerved to have had beſtowed upon it. But inſtead of this, alas! what do we find? The *Jews* contented themſelves with private tattle; and thought it enough to ſet that ſtory about, which the council had before extorted from the Soldiers. *This Saying*, ſays the Hiſtorian, *is commonly reported among the* Jews *until this day*. It went about from one to another amongſt themſelves; but they never offered to make the leaſt ſtep towards bringing the caſe in queſtion upon the publick ſtage. And what ſignifies tatling to the conviction of mankind, where examining and proving are the things required? To what purpoſe is ſpreading a report, and teaching people privately what they ſhould believe, when a cauſe lies at ſtake, and muſt ſink for ever, without ſome very extraordinary defence? Men do not uſe to take up with ſuch methods as theſe, when they have evident truth of their ſide; nor they do not uſe to ſuffer ſuch attacks in matters of ſuch conſequence, without making another ſort of oppoſition than ever the *Jews* thought fit to do in this affair.

And therefore we conclude, *That they were conſcious to themſelves of the truth of this charge, and knew that they had bribed the Soldiers to make that report.*

And conſequently, *That they were fully ſatisfied that* Jeſus Chriſt *was indeed riſen, otherwiſe they had not offered bribes to conceal it.*

Nor,

Nor, indeed, can any man, that does but allow himſelf to think what motives and principles mankind are governed by, and how things are always managed in caſes of the like nature, ever bring himſelf to believe, but *that the* Jews *would in ſome ſignal manner have vindicated themſelves in a point of this importance, upon which the whole Streſs of the Controverſy lay, if they had not procured that egregious piece of forgery, and known it very eaſy to be proved upon them.*

SECT XLVII.

BUT then there is another thing, which plainly ſhews, likewiſe, that they were ſelf-condemned; and that is, the *way in which they always managed the Controverſy with the* Chriſtians.

And he that ſhall but take the pains to compare their way of oppoſing *Chriſtianity*, with the Apoſtles method of propagating it; will ſurely ſee the ſigns of a very bad Cauſe in all their proceedings, if he has any eyes at all.

The Apoſtles delivered their meſſage in very plain and ſimple terms; they told the World what authority they had to deliver that meſſage; and put every body upon ſearching and enquiring into the Grounds and Reaſons of what they ſaid. The *Jews*, who had the writings of *Moſes and the Prophets* in their hands, which they firmly believed to be all of divine inſpiration, they exhorted to a careful and ſerious peruſal of thoſe writings; that they might aſſure themſelves, whether thoſe things which they teſtified of *Jeſus Chriſt* were agreeable to the ſcope and tenour of them, or no. As for the reſt of the World, who pretended to no *written* or *poſitive Revelation* of God's mind and will, they put them upon uſing their *Reaſon* and their *Senſes*, as men ought to do, in order to their being convinced of the truth

truth of any Doctrine. And for that end, they informed them of all circumſtances that were any way neceſſary for their conviction in this particular caſe; giving ſuch exact and punctual accounts of things, as could not be imagined to be given by any but men who were ſure they had truth on their ſide. And all this they did in ſo candid, meek, and good-natur'd a way, with ſo much tenderneſs and forbearance towards their enemies, tempered with a juſt zeal and concern for the cauſe which they maintained; that their management tho' without the leaſt ſhews of Art and Affectation, could not but be very agreeable to all perſons who propoſed to themſelves to conſider things with ſober and unprejudiced judgment.

The *Jews* took a courſe which was juſt the reverſe of this. They run out into heat and paſſion; and, inſtead of argument, threw dirt at the Apoſtles. For all the good and mild treatment which they had from them, they could never find in their hearts to make any other return than ſlander and reproach. They ſtigmatized them with the infamous names of *peſtilent Fellows*, *Ringleaders of Sedition*, *Men that turned the World upſide-down*, *and were enemies to* Ceſar *and his Government*. And theſe notions they buzzed into the ears of the Magiſtrates and Great Men; nay, and into the ears of the common people too, in all places where the Apoſtles came to preach the Goſpel: So that ſometimes whole cities were up in arms againſt them; and mobs, conſiſting of the leudeſt and moſt profligate wretches that could be got together, were raiſed upon them, and inflamed to the higheſt degree, even to the aſſaulting the houſes where the Apoſtles had taken ſhelter, and lying in wait for them, in order to execute the revenge of thoſe who had ſet them to work. And as the *Jews* laboured hard to get their very lives, which they would have been glad to have purchaſed at any rate whatſoever, ſo they many times did prevail ſo far as to get them thruſt

thruſt into ſtocks and priſons, and ſent out of towns with diſgrace; with many other ſuch little effects of ſpleen and malice, as they had power to bring about.

Now what was all this a ſign of, but *that they were conſcious to themſelves, that the Apoſtles were not to be born down in their teſtimony by any other methods than thoſe of fury and violence?* For do ſuch proceedings as theſe, ſo void of all common juſtice and humanity, look with any face of truth or innocence? Was that the right way to confute the *Chriſtian Religion*, to arm the rabble againſt it; to provide whips and ſhackles for the preachers of it, and repreſent them as traitors and enemies to the ſtate; to ſet up a loud cry, *Theſe men are rebels againſt* Ceſar, *and the* Roman *government is in danger by them*; and then laſh and perſecute them upon that imaginary Hypotheſis? Who would ever think that this ſhould be a proper courſe to ſtop the progreſs of a doctrine that came with ſuch good teſtimonials into the world? That railing and ſcolding, that outrage and tumult ſhould ever perſuade any thoughtful man, that the *Jews* were in the right, and the Apoſtles in the wrong, in what they maintained? Certainly, as perſecution can never convince any by-ſtander of the merits of a cauſe, except it be an abſolute bigot, that is one, *who having quitted all pretenſions to ſee and underſtand for himſelf, has left it to other people to do both for him*; ſo neither can it ever ſerve inſtead of reaſon to thoſe perſons who ſuffer under it, For *fleſh* and *mind* are two very different things; and tho' blows will make impreſſions, yet no man can be beaten into a new *ſcheme of thoughts.*

The Underſtanding is not tempered to be wrought on by arguments of *wood* and *ſteel*; nor will *fire* melt down an opinion, which challenges a trial by fair and rational methods. And therefore, thoſe who go that way to work, do not ſo much as pretend to treat mankind as reaſonable creatures; but deal with them

as

as *mere machines*, that are to be governed only by rude force and impulſe.

And what credit this is to a cauſe, all the world will eaſily judge. It is ſo irrational and abſurd in the nature of the thing, and ſo contrary to all the uſual procedures of mankind that have truth and right reaſon of their ſide, that, unleſs a man be ſtrangely biaſſed, he cannot forbear ſuſpecting falſhood and impoſture, where he ſees ſuch courſes taken. And for this reaſon we ſay, that the *Jews*, who carried matters to ſuch an extravagant height, ſometimes by open, and ſometimes by clandeſtine management, and under all the opportunities and provocations they had to the contrary, would never bring the great point in diſpute to any other iſſue, gave evident proofs of a bad cauſe; and ſhewed there was ſome grand truth ſpoken by the Apoſtles, which they were afraid the world ſhould believe.

SECT. XLVIII.

Fourthly, THE *Chriſtians* argue farther, *That it muſt needs be that* Jeſus Chriſt *was miraculouſly raiſed from the dead; ſince it is ſo very plain and evident, from all the allowed circumſtances of the caſe, that there could be no fraud or trick in conveying his body away.*

We ſhall do well to beſtow ſome time in a critical and rigorous examination of this argument; and the rather, becauſe the *Deiſts* content themſelves with making uſe of the ſame ſlender artifice which the *Jews* contrived to their hands ſo many ages ago; I mean, *chatting* and *talking* that the body of *Jeſus Chriſt* was ſtoln away by his Diſciples. This is the general cry of all theſe people; and it is the firſt word that is put into the mouth of a *young Deiſt*, by thoſe that have the charge of his education. *Chriſt Jeſus never roſe again* ---- *It is all*

all a cheat ---- The Diſciples carried off his body, and then publiſhed to the world that he was riſen again ----- And all this in order to the carrying on their own ſecular deſigns. At this rate they are taught to open againſt *Chriſtianity*, at their firſt ſetting out into the *world of Reaſon and Free-thinking*. Now tho' I propoſe to argue upon the matter by and by, yet at preſent I will make a ſtand, with this queſtion to theſe Gentlemen, *viz. How they come to know, or by what means they will prove, that any fraud of this nature was really tranſacted with reſpect to the body of* Jeſus Chriſt.

They affirm it, and it is but fair for other people to demand the proof of it. They will not take any thing *gratis dictum* from the *Chriſtians*. Why ſhould the *Chriſtians* take any thing from them upon thoſe terms? If one ſide muſt have reaſon, why ſhould not the other? Beſides, the character of *rational and free-thing Men*, which they ſo liberally aſſume to themſelves, obliges them to ſhew ſome grounds for what they aſſert: And they cannot come off without doing it, as other people may, whoſe minds are ill turned by education, or cramped with Bigotry and Superſtition.

We ask therefore, *How they make out the point which they aſſert with ſo much confidence?* Have *they*, or the *Jews*, for *Jews* and *Deiſts* are all one in this cauſe, whatever other differences there are between them, any authentick records, any proofs from allowed and genuine antiquity, to ſhew the truth of what they ſay? Or can they demonſtrate it, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of that word, without having recourſe to any thing of *moral evidence?* I am apt to believe that teſtimony will do them the moſt ſervice upon this occaſion; tho' we ſhall be contented with *Moral, Metaphyſical, Mathematical*, or any proof, provided we have any at all that is fit to be heard. I declare that I never heard of any thing offered by them for this purpoſe, *that could, with the moſt liberal and indulgent conceſſions, poſſible to be made within*

within the limits of rank abſurdity, ever pretend to paſs for a proof. And that we may not miſtake one another, nor blunder the cauſe, upon the notion of *abſurdity*; I declare likewiſe, that by *abſurdity*, I mean nothing elſe but what the general ſenſe of mankind votes to be ſo; and what the *Deiſts* themſelves ſtatedly call and allow to be ſo, in all caſes, except where religion is concerned. By this rule let it be tried, whether they have any thing to offer fit to perſuade a reaſonable creature of the reality of that *fraud*, which they aſſert, and breed up their Pupils in the belief of, with as much aſſurance as if they had ſtood by and actually ſeen it committed. But if it be found that they have no ſufficient grounds to bear them out in this matter, the queſtion is, *On which ſide does the knavery lie?* Is not this tricking and impoſing upon mankind, to tell a precarious ſtory in as ſolemn and magiſterial a way as if it were a demonſtrable truth? To talk upon a ſubject as dogmatically, as if they could make it out by lines and figures; and after all, have nothing to alledge, when the matter comes to be fairly enquired into, but ſome poor hypotheſis, or ſome random gueſſes and conjectures of their own, which a ſenſible man could not hear without indignation: This, I think, muſt be called deluding mankind. Yet by ſuch arts as theſe has the cauſe of *Deiſm* been all along carried on in the world: Or if it has not, and the patrons of it are ſure, I ſlander it in ſaying ſo, they will do well to bring their beſt evidences in vindication of it.

In the mean time I ſhall propoſe what is urged by the *Chriſtians* upon this head, which we have under conſideration at preſent.

SECT.

SECT XLIX.

TO ſhew therefore, *That there was not, nor could not be any kind of fraud or under-hand management in this affair; but that this is all the mere arbitrary and ridiculous clamour of a party of men, whoſe caſe is ſuch, that they are bound not to conſult either truth or probability in what they aſſert in their own defence: I ſay, in order to the evincing of this, there are ſeveral things to be conſidered; which relate,* Firſt, *To the* Jews: Secondly, *To the Diſciples of* Jeſus Chriſt *themſelves.*

Firſt of all, with reſpect to the *Jews.*

It is plain that they cut themſelves off from all manner of pretenſions to object againſt the *Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection*, by the exact care they took beforehand to prevent any fraud or cheat.

For the great men of the nation, that had been concerned in the Death of our Saviour, went in a body to the *Roman* Governour; and told him, That *Jeſus Chriſt* having ſignified in his life-time that he ſhould *riſe again*, it would be neceſſary to make all things as ſecure as poſſibly could be, by ſealing up the Tomb, and placing a ſtrong guard about it. This the forementioned Hiſtorian St. *Matthew* records particularly.— *The next day*, ſays he, *that followed the day of the preparation, the chief Prieſts and Phariſees came together unto* Pilate. And the ſpeech they made unto him was very remarkable, for the mighty concern it ſhewed they were under about this matter.—— *Sir, we remember, that the Deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, After three days I will riſe again.—— Command therefore that the Sepulchre be made ſure until the third day, leſt his Diſciples come by night and ſteal him away, and ſay unto the people he is riſen from the Dead; ſo the laſt error ſhall be worſe than the firſt.*

We find they own here, in as plain and expreſs terms as can be, not only that our Saviour had given them warning of his *Reſurrection*, and conſequently prepared them for it long beforehand; but alſo that they were perfectly well aware from what quarter the fraud was to be expected, and what diſmal conſequences would follow upon it, if, thro' want of due care, the Diſciples ſhould have an opportunity of bringing it about. Well; the favour they came to ask of the Governour is readily granted them: They are left entirely to their own liberty, to do whatever they think neceſſary, by way of Precaution, againſt any cheat of this nature. Pilate *ſaid unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as ſure as you can. So they went and made the Sepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch.*

I believe it was never pretended by any body, that the *Jews* were ſlandered by the Writer of this Hiſtory; or that this account of their proceedings was falſe in fact. As for their own parts, they never offered to appeal to the world of any abuſe in this matter, any more than in that other caſe of bribing the Soldiers: And there is no queſtion to be made, but the reaſon of their ſilence was in both caſes the ſame. If then it be true in fact that they did do thus; *that they made the Sepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch*: The queſtion is, What have they to complain of? What have they to object, or raiſe a difficulty upon? Was not every thing of their own doing, and therefore done to their compleat ſatisfaction? Did the Governour ſnub them, or oppoſe their deſign? Did they want power to command a watch? Did they want money to hearten them to the moſt exact and punctual diſcharge of their duty? Did they want malice to *Jeſus Chriſt*, that a man ſhould imagine them to be remiſs and cool in ſuch an affair upon that ſcore? How ſtrict and ſevere a charge would they certainly give thoſe men, whom they appointed to the important work of guard-

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ing the ſepulchre? No man can doubt, but the utmoſt power of words, in promiſes, threatnings, and the moſt ſolemn adjurations poſſible, was employed and made uſe of on that occaſion, both to ſtrike them with a deep ſenſe of the weight of the buſineſs committed to them, and to engage them to be diligent.

So that the matter reſts here:

The *Jews* had power and authority, they had malice and deſire, they had all the reaſons and obligations, that could poſſibly be incumbent on men, to prevent this trick of ſtealing away the body of *Jeſus Chriſt*. And therefore, I ſay, *Either they took ſuch care to prevent it, that it ſhould be impoſſible for any human art or induſtry to accompliſh ſuch a piece of fraud, or they did not.*

If they did not, I ask, Why they did not? What hindered them? What reaſon is to be given for their neglect to do ſo; when Opportunity, Intereſt and Inclination all conſpired to engage them to it?

If they did, and ſure it was very poſſible for them to do it, then why ſhould not their mouths have been for ever ſtopped? With what face could they pretend to diſpute a thing, which the utmoſt power and wit of man had laid the moſt effectual bar againſt that could be; and therefore could not be brought about, but by the miraculous power of Almighty God? Certainly they ought to have acknowledged an Interpoſition of divine Providence in the caſe. For men may be ſure, if they will, of effects that are altogether within their own reach and command: And when they know they have done all that men can do, and find juſt the contrary to what they reſolve upon, and muſt have come to paſs according to the ordinary courſe of things, it is a daring piece of Inſolence not to acknowledge the agency of a ſuperior cauſe.

However, there is nothing more evident, than that they have left themſelves no room, nor ſhadow of pretence, to object againſt the *Truth of Chriſt's righteouſneſs.*

And therefore this ſhews the horrid aggravation of their ſin; when, in ſpite of all this conviction of their own conſciences, atteſting what they had done themſelves, and what ſo many tongues proclaimed about them, the veracity of which they could not call in queſtion, they ſhould yet offer to debauch a parcel of men into a conſent to ſpread about ſuch a report as this, *That the body of* Jeſus *was ſtolen away by his Diſciples, while they ſlept.*

But the *Chriſtians* have ſo much charity for them, as to hope that the blood of that *Jeſus*, on whom they have endeavoured to fix this reproach, will avail to the making an atonement even for this ſin alſo.

SECT L.

AND thus we ſee, that by all the laws of common Juſtice, Truth, and right Reaſon, the *Jews* are excluded from all concern in the preſent argument.

That is, they have no right nor claim to be heard in the caſe. No exception ever made by them, or any of their forefathers, ſince the time of *Chriſt*'s death, ought to be allowed the privilege of common attention or conſideration; and that for the reaſons I have alledged. Nor, indeed, was it ever known or heard, *That where men had an abſolute, uncontroulable power of making whatſoever proviſions they ſhould think fit againſt a caſe, as the* Jews *had, they ſhould ever be indulged a liberty of arguing and pleading in that caſe afterwards, or ſuffered to paſs this for an excuſe upon mankind, that they had not done what they ſhould have done, in order to the making all things ſure on their own ſide.*

What has been ſaid affects our modern unbelievers no leſs than the others: For if the *Jews* muſt be utterly ſilent in this cauſe, to what purpoſe ſhould they undertake the argument? Do they think they could have taken more ſure and effectual courſes, in order to the

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diſcovery of the Impoſture, than what the *Jews* actually did? Certainly, unleſs they can give ſome very ſubſtantial reaſons to perſuade the world, that if they had been the managers of that affair, they would have uſed better methods for the preventing this fraud, than thoſe moſt inveterate enemies of *Jeſus Chriſt* ever thought of, or could put in practice; it is evident, that they cannot object any thing of that kind with a better face of modeſty and good ſenſe, than the *Jews* themſelves.

SECT. LI.

BUT we ſhall conſider now, Secondly, *Some circumſtances relating to the Diſciples of* Jeſus Chriſt; and ſee what reaſons ariſe from thence, to convince every man, who is diſpoſed to think calmly and impartially of the matter, that they were not, nor could not be concerned in ſo vile and horrible a piece of fraud as this.

And, *Firſt*, we ſay, *They could not have accompliſhed it, if they had been ſo wicked as to deſign and contrive it.* And the reaſon is, *Becauſe there were ſuch precautions taken againſt their doing ſo, as rendered it impoſſible:* Impoſſible, either to open Force and Violence, or to any clandeſtine Arts or Treachery. The *Jews* would no more have left things at ſuch an uncertain rate, that any thing the Diſciples were able to do ſhould have deprived them of the body of *Jeſus Chriſt*, than they would have ſet their hands to the ſubverſion of their own Religion and Laws, and the eſtabliſhing of *Chriſtianity* in its ſtead. For they had reaſon enough to believe that this would be the effect of it, if a firm perſuaſion of *Chriſt*'s being riſen from the dead ſhould once come to obtain generally in the world. Becauſe this would make all men ſee, that a Religion introduced by ſo ſtrange and ſurpriſing an event, muſt needs be of

God: And therefore, that whatever manifeſtations of himſelf he might before-times have made, either to the *Jews*, or any other people upon earth, ſignifying in what manner he would be worſhipped by them for a ſeaſon; yet this new and ſolemn diſcovery of his mind and will would undoubtedly engage the devout attention of mankind to it, and determine them to worſhip and ſerve him in that way, which he had therein revealed. And this the chief Prieſts were ſenſible of, when they told *Pilate*, *That the latter error would be worſe than the firſt.* And for that very reaſon, I ſay, they would not fail to make it impoſſible for the Diſciples of *Chriſt*, or any employed by them, to put any ſuch trick as this upon their Nation and Religion.

SECT. LII.

THE ſtory of carrying off the body of Jeſus Chriſt *while the watch was aſleep, is ſo very groſs, that it will ſcarce bear a telling:* And thoſe that do it in good earneſt, and hope at the ſame time to be believed; muſt either have a very little opinion of the ſenſe of thoſe they talk to, or a very great one of their own credit with mankind.

Let us conſider the matter a little: *The Diſciples did this while the men were aſleep!*

And how then did the trick come to be known? Did the Diſciples tell it themſelves? Or were the Guard conſcious of what paſſed in their ſleep? It is not common for men to be ſo. Moſt people need to be informed by others, who are awake, what is done by this or that perſon, at a time when their own ſenſes cannot give them an account of it. But theſe men affirm poſitively what is done, and by whom; when at the ſame time, by their own confeſſion, they were in their midnight dreams. This is very odd! Nor could they

ever

ever have known it, if they had not firſt conſulted the chief Prieſts and Phariſees. And it is a Marvel, that the wit of a whole *Sanhedrim* could not invent ſomething for men to ſay, that ſhould at leaſt have reſembled truth a little more than this account does. In ſhort, whether one ſuppoſes the Watch to have been aſleep or awake while this thing was done, a man ſees nothing but a wide field of Nonſenſe, and ridiculous Conſequences before him; ſuch, as I will venture to ſay, that he that is not loſt in it, muſt have been well uſed to ſuch ſort of way before. I am weary with arguing upon ſuch trifles. The Subject is grave and ſerious; and the ludicrous impertinences of this objection are apt to force a man into an air of talking, that may not be ſo ſuitable to the ſeriouſneſs of it; or at leaſt incline him to inſiſt on ſome vulgar things, which, tho' very true, and very good circumſtantial evidences may yet make it look little and deſpicable to its enemies. It is ſufficient that the ſtory is ſuch as preſently diſcovers itſelf, and ſhews a man at firſt view a bare face of abſurdity, without putting him to the trouble of a long chain of argument to find it out.

SECT LIII.

BUT Secondly, *Had the Diſciples been concerned in ſo vile a piece of Impoſture, with what ſpirit or courage could they ever have entered upon ſo ſolemn and publick a Miniſtry, as they afterwards did enter upon?*

How could they ever preach remiſſion of ſins, and everlaſting life, in the name of a perſon; who, inſtead of riſing again, and enduing them with Grace and Power for ſo arduous an undertaking, had left his Body to be conveyed away by baſe and mean arts of their contrivance? They muſt know perfectly well, that as he could not deliver himſelf from Death at firſt, (for if

he was an Impoſtor, to be ſure he would have done it if he could) nor yet conquer it afterwards by a *Reſurrection*; ſo he was not a proper perſon for them to expect any aſſiſtance from. If he could not ſave himſelf, how ſhould he be a Saviour to them and others? How ſhould he ever protect them from the power and malice of the World, and carry them ſafe thro' all enemies and dangers, to a bliſsful ſtate in the next life, who had left them ſo miſerable and deſtitute here? Much leſs could they ever hope for any countenance from Heaven; or to have the aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit to work ſigns and wonders, while they were propagating a notorious cheat. They might have juſtly feared to be overtaken by the Divine vengeance, every ſtep they took in ſuch a buſineſs; but, with the utmoſt preſumption mankind can be guilty of, they could never expect Divine ſupports and conſolations. From the World they had nothing but ſhame and contempt, perſecution and diſtreſs, and all theſe in the higheſt degree, to expect. For as they preached a moſt amazing and ungrateful Doctrine, and came all unpoliſhed to the work, having nothing to fix the attention, or attract the eſteem of mankind; ſo they could neither hope to make converts, or to meet with any good quarter where they went. And therefore they were, of all men in the World, the moſt forlorn and miſerable. They had neither Heaven nor Earth on their ſide; but both engaged againſt them. All the ill uſage that could be in this World, and ſevere puniſhments in the next, for their horrible profanation of the ſacred Name of God, in declaring he ſent them to publiſh this Impoſture, was all that they could have a proſpect of. And therefore, being deſtitute of all motives that could poſſibly encourage them to ſuch an undertaking as preaching the Goſpel; I ſay, they would never have gone about it; but the whole deſign had dropped, and the World never heard of the *Chriſtian Faith*. But they did do it, and that with indefatigable

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zeal and induſtry; with a ſpirit far exceeding all that ever was known in human nature before: Such as knew no baulk or deſpondency, no wearineſs or remiſſion; but held it out thro' all ſtorms, and was even wrought up to greater heights by perſecution itſelf. And a man may, with as much reputation to his ſenſe and underſtanding, affirm the groſſeſt and moſt palpable contradictions in nature; as that men, who were conſcious to themſelves of ſo vile a cheat, ſhould ever manage things after this manner †.

SECT LIV.

Thirdly, *AS they could not, nor would not have any perſonal immediate concern in ſo abominable an enterprize; ſo neither would they engage, or would any other perſons be engaged by them therein.*

Let us put the Caſe for argument-ſake, and ſee what common ſenſe will allow a man to ſuppoſe to be done, by perſons in their circumſtances, with reſpect to this matter. For we muſt not make ridiculous and extravagant ſuppoſitions, and fancy the Apoſtles to do what men in their right wits never did, or would do in the like caſe; and then go and argue to the diſadvantage of the *Chriſtian Cauſe*, from thoſe unjuſt and chimerical ſuppoſitions of our own making.

† *This wonderful ſpirit of courage and reſolution appeared in the ſufferings of the* Chriſtians *after the Apoſtles time; of which there are many ſurprizing Inſtances on record.*

Ὑπομένομεν τὰς ἐσχάτας τιμωρίας καὶ θανατούμενοι χαίρομεν. Juſt. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph.

And Euſebius *tells us they did*—— μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ γέλωτος καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὴν ὑστάτην ἀπόφασιν τῶν θανάτου καταδέχεσθαι. Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib. 8. c. 9,

——*That they were wont,* Ἐις αὐτὴν τὴν τελευταίαν ἀναπνοὴν, τῶν ἄλυπον καὶ ἀτάραχον καὶ ἀπτόητον διατήρειν καρτερίαν, ὥστε ψάλλειν καὶ ὕμνους καὶ εὐχαριστίας εἰς τὸν τῶν ὅλων Θεὸν ἀναπέμπειν. Id Loc. citat.

Now

Now the true ſtate of the Caſe is thus:

Here was a ſmall number of men, who, having cloſely adhered to Jeſus Chriſt, *whom the* Jews *had crucified, and profeſſing to live after his laws, had rendered themſelves obnoxious to the ſame ill-will and reſentments, which had appeared ſo remarkably againſt their Maſter.*

They were poor, and could give no bribes.

They could make no tempting promiſes to allure men into their intereſt, having nothing but ruin and miſery before them.

But beſides, common prudence itſelf would never have ſuffered them to truſt any body with this important Secret. For whoever they ſhould have made ſo infamous a propoſal to, as that of ſtealing away the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt*, would, either out of pure deteſtation of ſo groſs a Villany; or to curry favour with the *Jews*, by ſo ſignal a piece of ſervice done to their Cauſe; or, laſtly, out of hope of ſome very great reward, for the diſcovery of a plot of ſuch conſequence as this: For one or other of theſe reaſons, I ſay, would infallibly have divulged the matter. If they were perſons of probity, their abhorrence of ſo foul a Crime would have made them do it: If not, the proſpect of certain gain and advantage would have charmed them to the diſcovery. From the Apoſtles they could expect nothing; from the *Jews* they might expect every thing that could be a temptation to mankind. They had no imaginable motives to perſuade them to keep the Apoſtles counſel; but they had reputation, applauſe, and rewards from the *Jews*; nay, and a reward to expect from God too, if they had an eye to his Glory, and the general Good of mankind, in the laying open of ſo vile an Impoſture.

How is it credible then, that men in ſuch circumſtances as the Diſciples were, ſhould, if they had attempted it, ever have ſucceeded in their attempt, of engaging a company of men in ſo deſperate a Deſign as that of ſtealing the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt?* And how is

is it credible, that any others but men, who were desperate and mad even to extremity, ſhould ever engage themſelves in it, under all the precautions taken by the *Jews* to fruſtrate their attempts, and the many arguments ariſing both from Senſe and Reaſon to diſſuade them from it? And ſuppoſing a ſet of ſuch wretches could have been got ready, and tied faſt to the undertaking; yet how is it credible, that they ſhould be able to break thorow all the Obſtacles which the power and policy of the *Jewiſh* nation had laid in their way? In a word, what is there in this whole *Hypotheſis* that is credible, according to the common rules and meaſures of credibility amongſt men?

Let us bring the caſe down to plain fact and experience in the world; and ſee where any attempt of this kind, by ſuch perſons, and in ſuch circumſtances, was ever accompliſhed and brought to perfection. Nay, let us but find out where there are a ſet of men, whoſe heads are turned after ſuch a manner, that they can heartily believe that ſuch an exploit as this was ever to be performed by men in the condition of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples; in oppoſition to all the efforts of a forewarned, malicious, potent, watchful Nation of Adverſaries, whoſe Intereſt, Temper, Policy, and Religion, all obliged them to prevent it.

But I ſhall cloſe this argument with one queſtion to the unbelieving people: Which being a queſtion of fact, and of modern fact too, pretty notorious, and very pertinent to our purpoſe, it will deſerve the more conſideration.

They know very well, that in a certain country, not many years ago, there were a ſet of men who pretend-to the gift of *Prophecy* and *Divine Inſpiration*; and accordingly gave out many ſpeeches and warnings, which they declared were from God.

They remember alſo, that one of this number dying, it was given out by the reſt of the Sect that he would

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riſe again. And this was done with ſuch an air of confidence and aſſurance, that no little commotion was raiſed in a great city by that means.

I need not ſay what the event was, after prudent care was taken to prevent foul play; and matters were ordered ſo, that if the defunct perſon did quit his Grave at the appointed time, it ſhould appear to all the world to be a true and real Reſurrection, and that the voice of the omnipotent had indeed called him from thence. But after all, ſuppoſe it had been pretended by the people of this ſect, that their Fellow-Prophet did in truth riſe from the dead on the day that was ſet: That the power of Almighty God had exerted itſelf on their behalf, and given full teſtimonials of the Truth of their Miſſion by reſtoring that perſon to life again, whom ſo many eyes had ſeen truly and realy dead but a little before. And put the caſe, *That this ſtory had been propagated with ſuch ſucceſs, that there were reaſons to fear leſt a good part of the country, by degrees, be proſelyted over to the belief of it, and ſo great changes and confuſions in the publick ariſe therefrom:*

I would ask theſe Gentlemen, *What courſe they themſelves, being upon the ſpot, would have taken, in order to their being compleatly ſatisfied of the right of this matter? And whether they do not believe they could have come to a final poſitive concluſion about it, one way or other, after ſuch ſearch and application for that end, as the world would expect from men who ſet up for the niceſt judges of Truth and right Reaſon?*

I believe they will take the wiſeſt and moſt prudent part of the anſwer, which is the *Affirmative*; and allow, that it was very poſſible and practicable from them to come to ſuch a determinate reſolution about the Truth of this caſe.

Very well then: And why ſhould not people ſeventeen hundred years ago have been as curious and inquiſitive, and as well able to ſatisfy themſelves fully about the

the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; as our *Deiſts* at this time of day, about the *Reſurrection* of this pretended Prophet? They cannot pretend to have either the power, or the opportunity, or the reaſons for enquiring, which the *Jews* had: And to think that they have better eyes to ſee thro' an *Impoſture* than the reſt of the world, is unſufferable vanity and arrogance.

Had our modern Prophet been conveyed out of his grave by any ſlight or trick of his companions, how warm and eager would theſe Gentlemen have been in the purſuit of them, when they had once ſcented the matter! They would not have been diverted by frivolous ſtories and pretences; they would not have been ſatisfied with groundleſs and precarious reports: But having begun the chace, they would have held it on till they had run the *Impoſtors* down, and laid the plots open to the world. They would never have contented themſelves with common ſtory and fame, *his companions came by night, and ſtole him away*; but they would have ſatisfied mankind that they did ſo: As the *Jews* would have done in the like caſe, if there had been the ſame reaſon for it.

And it is a wonder to me, theſe Gentlemen ſhould not be ſo civil to the *Jews*, as to believe that they were both able and willing to do as much towards the diſcovery of an *Impoſture* in that caſe, as themſelves could and would have done in that we are now ſpeaking of.

I hope they will allow one of the perſons to be much more famous and remarkable than the other, and the conſequence of his *Reſurrection* to be of proportionably greater moment: So that I can give my ſelf no manner of account why they ſhould not conclude, *That there was all the care taken, both to prevent and find out the cheat, which they themſelves would have taken, had they been upon the ſpot; or would have done in this caſe of the modern Prophet, before they would have been impoſed upon by a new Reſurrection.* If they fancy they have more wit and ſa-

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gacity than the *Jews*: I ſay, tho' this be very vain and idle, yet I hope they will not ſet up to rival them in point of ſpleen and malice. And they know very well, that hatred and revenge will ſharpen people's wits; and make up, in many caſes, for the defects of underſtanding. However the *Jews* were not that ſtupid people, that ſome of theſe Gentlemen have repreſented them to be.

After what has been ſaid upon this fourth head of Argument, I would hope theſe Gentlemen may, upon cool thoughts, find it reaſonable to make leſs noiſe about *frauds* and *impoſtures*, and other ſtrange things, commonly talked of amongſt them: Which having never made any attempt at proving, or ſhewing how it was ſo much as probable they ſhould be brought about; we muſt conclude the deſign of it is either to amuſe people with ſome ſhew of objections againſt *Chriſtianity*, or elſe purely to make an experiment how far the credit of their word will go amongſt mankind inſtead of demonſtration.

SECT. LV.

Fifthly, AND Laſtly, *The horrid and intolerable Abſurdities conſequent upon the Suppoſition that* Chriſt Jeſus *did not riſe from the dead, ſhall cloſe the proof offered on the ſide of the* Chriſtians *to evince the Truth of it.*

I have ſhewn already, at PROP. VI. PART II. that Abſurdities of the *moral* kind, are, in the nature of things, worſe and more wretched than any that relate to matters of *Science*; and therefore, that it is not only fair and juſt to pronounce that Propoſition falſe from whence ſuch manifeſt Impoſſibilities are legitimately inferred, but alſo that the caſe is much worſe for a man to be reduced and driven to a neceſſity of ſtanding

ing by them, than to be forced to the like extremity in the course of any other sort of argument whatsoever.

Let us see, therefore, what a man must be obliged to believe, who makes this Doctrine of *Christ's Resurrection* to be all cheat and delusion.

He must believe——

That a despicable company of wilful *Impostors* and Deceivers, men of a hated nation and religion, without learning and discipline, without skill and experience, without any of the arts of pleasing and recommending themselves to mankind, should run down all the wit, and power, and policy of the World; and preaching a most despised, incredible, and seemingly ridiculous Doctrine, directly contrary to all the worldly interests and humours of men, to their religion and customs, and to their reason and philosophy too, should propogate the belief of it † *far and wide thro' the Earth*; so that there was scarce a nation in the whole compass of the Globe, but what, in whole or in part, received this fiction as the most sacred Truth of God, and laid all the stress of their Salvation upon it accordingly.

Or if he has so much charity for the Apostles, as not to think them crafty and designing *Impostors*; he must believe that all this was done by *Lunaticks* and

† Οὐδὲ ἔν γε ὅλως ἐστὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων, εἴτε βαρβάρων, εἴτε ἑλλήνων, εἴτε ἁπλῶς ὁτινιοῦν ὀνόματι προσαγορευομένων, ἐν οἷς μὴ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ σταυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαὶ καὶ εὐχαριστίαι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνονται. Just. Dial. cum Tryph.

Μόνος ἀνὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην χριστὸς παρὰ τοῖς πᾶσι βεβόηται, καὶ τῆς ἐξ αὐτοῦ χριστιανῶν προσηγορίας, τὴν σύμπασ' ἔπλησεν οἰκουμένην. Euseb. Demonst. Evang. lib. 5.

But it is endless to reckon up the testimonies that might be brought under this Head. It is remarkable, that the enemies of Christianity *themselves gave it the name of the* prevailing Doctrine. *So* Porphyry, *who called it* ἡ κρατοῦσα διδαχὴ; *which, as I remember, is taken notice of by* Eusebius.

Madmen:

Madmen: That men, hurried by the *Impetus* of a wild extravagant fancy, were maſters of all that conduct and management, that argument and addreſs, which was requiſite to bring theſe aſtoniſhing effects about. Or if he finds it too hard to ſuppoſe, that a company of diſtracted men ſhould ever be able to argue with ſo much art and force, as to over-power all the wiſdom and learning of the World; then he muſt think the reſt of mankind, who believed them, to be mad as well as they: That they were convinced and perſuaded by mere Enthuſiaſm: That they miſtook downright raving for the ſtrongeſt reaſon; and a chain of abſurd incoherent falſities for bright and evident demonſtrations of truth: That all the ſages, ſtateſmen and philoſophers, who embraced *Chriſtianity* in great numbers, as well as the poor and illiterate, believed they had proofs which they had not; thought things were plain and clear to them, which were not; fancied irreſiſtible ſtrength, majeſty and eloquence in an empty noiſe and ſound of words, made by a company of poor diſtempered men, who neither knew nor cared what they ſaid.

Or, Laſtly, He muſt believe,

That the greateſt and moſt remarkable revolution that the World ever knew or heard of, was effected without either any proper and neceſſary *Natural* means, or any *Supernatural* help and aſſiſtance.

For all the *Natural* means that can be thought of, are reducible to the heads of *Compulſion* or *Perſuaſion*; whether by reaſon and rhetorick, or bribes, and other temptations of that kind. Theſe are all, and the only ways, that men can make uſe of to accompliſh any deſign of this nature. And I challenge all the World to ſhew me, in a ſingle inſtance, which of them all was made uſe of by the Apoſtles in the propagation of the *Chriſtian Faith.*

Then as for *Supernatural* aſſiſtances, it is paſt all doubt that they could have none, even in the opinion of the *Deiſts* themſelves. For

For God would not, nor could not afford them any help; and that, whether they were wilful *Impoſtors*, or mere undeſigning crack-brained *Enthuſiaſts*. For the work they were engaged in being a horrible cheat upon mankind in the matters of their Salvation, it would be blaſphemy to ſuppoſe him to have concurred to the ſucceſs of it, and as for *demons* and *evil ſpirits*, theſe Gentlemen laugh at all the ſtories of their exiſtence, and operations. Magick arts and enchantments, conjuration and witchcraft are things quite out of the way of their belief: And therefore, to be ſure, they will not ſo much as ſuſpect there were any artifices of this kind made uſe of to delude mens underſtanding, and ſo help on this ſtupendious revolution in the world. However, ſince theſe Gentlemen will not hear of *dæmons* in other caſes, they ſhall not be allowed to bring them in here, to help at a dead lift, for the ſolution of a difficulty. And if other people muſt be ridiculed, as credulous ſuperſtitious fools, for aſſerting upon unanſwerable teſtimonies of fact, confederacies between ſuch beings, as *evil ſpirits* and *wicked men* in this world; we ought to take care that they have not the liberty of ſuppoſing any combination of that kind, when it is only to ſerve their own purpoſes in an argument. So that here, I ſay, was the moſt ſurprizing turn that was ever given to the affairs of the world, given by nothing at all; brought about by no body knows or can gueſs, or pretend to aſſign and determine what it was. Neither Heaven nor Hell was concerned in the matter. There was nothing in or of mankind, that can be ſhewn to be capable of producing ſuch an effect, according to the ordinary laws of nature, and the known experience of the world.

Neither wit and learning, nor arts and intrigues, nor money and intereſt, nor open force and violence; and I dare ſay, theſe Gentlemen can tell us of no other

ways beſides theſe, by which Parties and Factions are ever made in the world.

But we will go on.

The *Deiſt* muſt believe farther——

That twelve poor fiſhermen were not only able, without any ſort of aſſiſtance, to compaſs that vaſt deſign of making the world ſtoop to the laws they impoſed; but alſo, that they laid their plot ſo deep, that the effects of it ſhould be permanent and laſting, and no ſucceeding age or generation ever be able to fathom it, and ſhew where the cheat lay. That a company of rude, untaught Mechanicks, out-did the profoundeſt wiſdom and ſagacity of mankind; and concerted matters ſo artfully, that none of all the penetrating and inquiſitive *Genii* of the world, for a ſucceſſion of ſo many Centuries, ſhould, after their deepeſt reſearches and examinations, find it poſſible to diſcover the leaſt fault or flaw in the contrivance.

He muſt believe——

That theſe men had abſolutely diveſted themſelves of all the principles of Self-love, Tenderneſs, Care, and Regard to their own preſervation or happineſs: That they deſpiſed all the comforts and enjoyments of life: That they ventured upon poverty and miſery, upon obloquy and ſhame, upon perſecution and torments, upon death and damnation itſelf in the next world, and all for nothing; for no end or purpoſe that can be imagined or thought of: That they bid defiance to all that human nature can ever dread or ſhun in this world, without having any deſign in view; without being acted by any motives, or having any grounds and reaſons for what they did.

For a deſign that bears no proportion to mens actions, is no deſign at all; juſt as an agent or cauſe, that is wholly uncapable to produce ſuch or ſuch an effect, is, with reſpect to that effect, no cauſe at all. And that is demonſtrably the caſe here. For it is manifeſt from all the circumſtances of the matter, that theſe perſons

ſons could have no end in view, that bore any proportion to the actions they did, or the dangers they ventured upon. Nay, they had none but dark and diſmal proſpects before them; and, inſtead of quickening motives, they had the greateſt diſcouragements to action, that men could ever poſſibly lie under.

And therefore there is no remedy, but we muſt ſuppoſe them to be a ſort of men ſpecifically diſtinct from all others in the World; to be made after ſuch a manner, and endowed with ſuch tempers and diſpoſitions, as no other men beſides themſelves ever were. Becauſe, as we have ſhewn, PROP. I. and II. PART II. Mankind are influenced by ſuch motives, as hope and fear. They are led by proſpects of intereſt, gain, honour, or favour amongſt their fellow-creatures, or elſe by principles of piety and devotion; ſo that what they do, is the effect either of a ſuperſtitious and miſtaken, or elſe of a truly religious zeal for God.

Whereas all theſe are evidently excluded from the preſent Caſe, and conſequently it muſt run up to this monſtrous concluſion at laſt, *viz. That God Almighty had made a ſet of prepoſterous, irregular creatures, fit to carry on a wretched deſign in the World, that required ſomething very extraordinary and particular in the conſtitutions of thoſe that were to have the management of it.* But to go on.

He muſt believe ——

That thoſe very Perſons, who, but a few hours before, had ſo little ſpirit and courage left them, that they forſook their Maſter in his greateſt extremities; and, after all their proteſtations of inviolable conſtancy and fidelity to him, were yet ſo over-powered by terrible apprehenſions, that they durſt not own themſelves his Diſciples; no, nor ſcarce ſhew their heads by day-light, for fear of the Jews: *That theſe men, I ſay, ſhould all of a ſudden grow ſo reſolute, as to venture upon that bold and hazardous undertaking of forcing the Sepulchre, and carrying off his Body.*

Nay, that they did not only venture, but did actually do it. And that not a man of all the Guards, placed there by the *Jews*, was ever alarmed or disturbed, but slept on securely till the design was executed; and yet, after all, could tell very punctually, when they awaked, that the Disciples had been there, and stolen the Body away.

He must believe this to be possible and true; or else, that the Guards themselves favoured the Attempt, and and only counterfeited a sleep, to give the Impostors an opportunity of finishing what they came about.

He must believe——

That men thus rash and desperate, busied in an enterprize of so much danger, and which therefore required all the expedition and dispatch possible to be made, would spend precious Time in unaccountable Niceties and Ceremonies, and do such things as could be of no manner of use or service to them; but, on the other hand, evidently expose them to the danger of being surprized and caught.

That, instead of taking a dead Body away, wrapped up, and covered as they found it, they would first divest it of its Burial-Cloaths, and then dispose them in several parcels by themselves, some in one place, and some in another; and not rather chuse to carry off all together, as Thieves would infallibly have done, who were in haste, and knew not but the next minute might bring the Guards about them.

And certainly those persons, who could have found a safe and private repository for the Body of *Jesus Christ*, after they had so artfully gotten it out of the Tomb, could also have found a way to dispose of the Burial-Cloaths, that they might never have been seen more to discover the Trick; and therefore, infallibly would never have left them where they were actually found.

Lastly, Such a man must believe——

That a Company of the greatest Impostors that ever the World had, and who therefore must necessarily be the worst

men

men that ever were, did notwithſtanding furniſh mankind with the moſt exact Syſtem of Morality that ever was; and taught ſuch rules of living, as were never to be expected from all the ſchools of Philoſophy in the World.

That men, whoſe only purpoſe and deſign was to cheat and abuſe the World, ſhould yet induſtriouſly lay the ſureſt foundations for the peace and happineſs of it, that ever were or could be laid.

That the vileſt and moſt notorious Hypocrites would ſpend all their time, and their very lives too, in indefatigable labours, to make other men upright and ſincere; and tho' their whole buſineſs, upon this Hypotheſis, was nothing elſe but lying and deceiving, would yet denounce everlaſting Damnation, and inſiſt upon it, that no leſs than this ſhould be the puniſhment of all thoſe who allowed themſelves in ſuch practice.

That having themſelves no notions at all of the Great and Glorious GOD, they ſhould yet impart the moſt rational and becoming notions of him to the reſt of mankind; and by no other Principles but thoſe of pure Atheiſm and Irreligion, kindle a flame of deſire in the hearts of men to ſerve and worſhip him.

In a word, that they took infinitely more pains to contradict and confute themſelves; nay, to expoſe themſelves to all the World, as the moſt abandoned ſinners that ever came into it; than they needed to have done to have eſtabliſhed the beſt Reputation, and gotten an immortal Fame amongſt men.

That they compiled their ſyſtem of Religion, as a ſtanding Monument to their own ſhame; and that all their Sermons and Writings were but ſo many Satires and Lampoons upon themſelves.

SECT. LVI.

NOW theſe are ſome, and but ſome, of thoſe extravagancies, which muſt paſs for certain and unqueſtionable truths among the Deiſts.

Theſe are ſome articles of their belief, reſulting from their grand Hypotheſis of Cheat and Impoſture, in the matter of *Chriſt's Reſurrection.*

It is true, that, by artful and plauſible turns, a *Deiſt* may ſeem to avoid the Odium of theſe conſequences; and make people believe, he is chargeable with no ſuch abſurdities, as we pretend to faſten upon him. This may eaſily be done by the power of words, which thoſe Gentlemen ſometimes make very happy uſes of this way. But after all, there is a right and a wrong there is a difference between real truth, and ſophiſtry well diſguiſed and dreſſed up in imitation of it: And the *former* will ſtand, in ſpite of all the falſe and deluding appearances of the *latter.*

And as theſe inferences are plain and naked truth; ſo I make no doubt but they will ever be ſo, to all men who have no Intereſt to keep them from owning it.

Coroll. 1. *The* Deiſts, *by denying the fact of* Chriſt's Reſurrection, *muſt believe things, which are, beyond compariſon, more prodigious and incredible, than all that the* Chriſtians, *who own and profeſs the Truth of this Doctrine, are bound to believe by virtue of ſuch their profeſſion.*

For all that the *Chriſtians* pretend to in the matter is this, *viz. That* Jeſus Chriſt *having ſuffered an ignominious and painful Death upon the Croſs, was, on the third day after, raiſed up again by the Power of Almighty God; and that having ſpent ſome time here on earth after his Reſurrection, he was then carried up into Heaven, by the ſame*

ſame Divine Power; where he ſtill reſides, being crowned with honour and glory.

Now I deſire to know what there is that can be called *incredible* in this account? What there is that thwarts any eſtabliſhed law or principle of reaſon, for a man to believe it? *It is not an incredible thing, that God ſhould raiſe the dead.* And it is not incredible, that he ſhould raiſe and glorify ſuch a perſon as *Jeſus Chriſt*, who had lived a perfectly holy and blameleſs life, and died a cruel and miſerable death, by the implacable malice of his enemies.

It was not inconſiſtent with any of the Divine Perfections, nor is there any reaſon poſſible to be given *à priori*, which ſhould ſhew that God ought not to have done this: As I have particularly demonſtrated before.

So that here is no manner of abſurdity or inconvenience conſequent upon the belief and profeſſion of this *Chriſtian Doctrine.*

But the Hypotheſis of the *Deiſts* is loaded with infinite abſurdities and contradictions. They muſt be forced, as we have ſeen already, to make ſuch wretched ſuppoſitions, in order to ſolve plain and evident matter of fact, as are not to be heard and endured by any man that has the leaſt degree of common ſenſe; and which they themſelves would hoot a perſon for making, in any other caſe. They are obliged to contradict all the knowledge and certain experience of the world; to fall foul upon all the laws of human nature; and make men to be, and to do ſuch ſort of things, as they never were nor can be, nor never did nor can do, while they continue to be men. And all this is the natural and genuine conſequence of their avowed Hypotheſis, without any ſtraining of it, or unfair management whatſoever. And therefore I infer, in the next place,

SECT. LVII.

Coroll. 2, THAT *all their pretenſions to juſt and impartial thinking*, in theſe matters at leaſt, *are vain and idle*; *that their ſo much boaſted averſion to all kind of Bigotry and Credulity, is mere jeſt and ſcene*; *and that they are, in reality, either ſome of the moſt fondly credulous perſons in the world, or elſe*, which is infinitely worſe, *wilfully and obſtinately ſet to overlook truth which is againſt them.*

For if to be credulous, be to believe the moſt prodigious things, without any ſhew of reaſon or proof for them: If it be bigotry, to take the moſt abſurd and ridiculous ſtories for certain truths, upon the bare word and authority of another perſon, who dictates to a man's underſtanding, and ſettles the articles of his faith for him; then are the *Deiſts* fairly chargeable with both theſe, and that in an extraordinary degree.

The *little people* amongſt them, who never examine and ſearch into things themſelves, but are led on by others, and make uſe of their eyes inſtead of their own; theſe are Bigots, that is, men who are groſly abuſed and impoſed upon by others, to believe things that are not true, but only ſerve the turn of a party. This is the ſame thing with what they call in their language being *Prieſt-ridden*; when they would intimate how the common people are governed, and led on in a blind road of belief, by the *Chriſtian* Clergy. All the difference is, that the *Chriſtian* (the *Proteſtant Chriſtian*) Teachers, give their people the grounds and reaſons of their faith, and require no man to believe them upon their word, without ſubſtantial evidence and proof for what they ſay. But the Gentleman on the other ſide, wont truſt the people under their inſtitution with ſuch things as reaſons, but think it ſufficient to order and preſcribe the matter

matter of their belief: Well knowing, that *Ignorance* is as much the mother of irreligion in principle, as of falſe religion and devotion in practice.

As for the *leading and governing men of the party*, thoſe who pretend to argue and reaſon upon the matter, if they heartily believe their own ſcheme, they are credulous to a prodigy; in that ſuch abſurd and ridiculous things as the conſequences of it, will go down with them without offence. Nor can I gueſs why they ſhould ſtop here, and not go on to the fictions of a *Popiſh Legend*, or a *Turkiſh Alcoran*. It is true, ſome of thoſe ſtories appear more ludicrous and comical, or more deſpicable and ſordid; and ſo incline a man either to contemn, or laugh at them: But I dare ſay, they do not involve more inconſiſtencies and impoſſibilities, in the nature and order of things; than what the *Deiſts*, if they act a ſincere part, muſt believe in making the *Chriſtian Religion* an *Impoſture*.

It would, perhaps, give a man more diverſion to hear of birds and beaſts cringing and paying their adorations to a *conſecrated wafer*, when brought within ſight of them; but it would ſhock him with a deeper ſenſe of impoſſibility, *to hear of a whole world of rational creatures, adoring a crucified* (reputed) *malefactor, as the Son of the Eternal God, and the Great Judge of the World; and all upon the teſtimony of twelve poor Fiſhermen, without any concurrence of divine power and providence, or any human arts to diſpoſe them thereto.* Nay, no arts of man, it is plain, could ever poſſibly have wrought effects any thing comparable to theſe? Or if theſe Gentlemen think otherwiſe, let them make the experiment, and ſatisfy themſelves. Let a company of them go forth, and propoſe ſome ſtrange and new doctrine to the world; let them ſet it off with all the advantages of eloquence and wit; let them argue and perſuade, promiſe and threaten; and try, if by any or all of theſe ways, they can propagate their opinion through all the king-

kingdoms of the univerſe; and impreſs ſuch a ſenſe of it on the minds of men, that they ſhall all agree to make it a fundamental article of their Faith, and commit it to writing, and tranſlate it into all languages, and recommend it as an invaluable treaſure to ſucceeding generations. I doubt they would find this hard work; and I as firmly believe, that they would never venture Reputation, Pleaſure, Fortune, and Life itſelf upon ſuch a deſign. And I think it may fairly be urged, as a very good argument to them, if there were nothing elſe to be ſaid in the caſe, *That there muſt be ſomething very extraordinary in the matter, when a few deſpiſed, illiterate men ſhould be able to do that in two or three years ſpace, which more than ſo many thouſands of theſe Gentlemen, ſuch great Maſters of Reaſon, Wit and Policy as they ſet up for, would never be able to accompliſh the hundredth part of, were they to be allowed as many Centuries, as the others had Months and Weeks, to do it in.*

But if, on the other hand, they ſee into all theſe conſequences, and know how bad and perplexed they are, and yet reſolve in ſeeing, not to ſee, and in knowing, not to know them; the caſe is infinitely worſe: And I ſhall chuſe rather to let it paſs without reflections, than to make any upon it that may ſeem harſh and invidious.

SECT. LVIII.

WE have now ſeen upon what grounds the *Chriſtians* proceed to aſſure themſelves, *That this Doctrine is true.* What the reſult of all is, we ſhall ſee by and by.

However, before I enter upon that matter of ſumming up the evidence, and demonſtrating what it will amount to, by virtue of the principles laid down and eſtabliſhed in PART II. of this Treatiſe; I think it very reaſonable and

and expedient to conſider, *What the* Deiſts *have to ſay to the contrary.*

For this will help much to the encreaſe and ſtrengthening of the evidence; and we ſhall draw our concluſion with far more advantage, when we ſhall have evinced, *That theſe Gentlemen have not any thing that is fine and truly plauſible to object.*

For I cannot call any objection ſo, in which the ſophiſtry is not pretty artfully hid, and does not imitate truth ſo well, as to produce a little kind of ſhock upon the hearing of it, and require ſome pains in order to the finding it out. Now I do not apprehend any thing of this nature in any objection of theirs againſt the fact of our *Saviour's Reſurrection.*

I ſpeak of what they have hitherto thought fit openly to declare of their minds as to that matter; for all the reſt ſtands for nothing: And the ſtrongeſt objections poſſible, are no objections to any party till they are propoſed and made known.

But we will conſider them diſtinctly.

SECT LIX.

FIRST then, as for the *Diſciples ſtealing away the Body of* Jeſus Chriſt, I have conſidered that very particularly already; and ſhewn, *That if there be any methods and rules eſtabliſhed amongſt mankind for judging when a thing is extravagant and abſurd, we muſt conclude and pronounce that ſuppoſition to be ſo.* But then that which cuts off all that ſort of talk at once, and which is all I ſhall ſay more upon that head, is this, *viz. That tho' they could ſhew ever ſo unexceptionably in* Theory, *how ſuch an egregious fraud as that might have been fairly practicable; tho' they could form the moſt regular and conſiſtent* Hypotheſis, *which ſhould ſolve all the* Phænomena, *and make us ſenſible how all the parts and ſteps of ſuch a Deſign*

Deſign might have gone on, without any appearance of Contradiction, or falling foul upon any Laws of Human Nature and the World; yet, unleſs they went on to actual Truth and Matter of Fact, and ſhewed that things were really managed thus and thus, in this particular Caſe of the Reſurrection of Chriſt; *unleſs, I ſay, they did this, all their* Theory *would be but ſo much banter and trifle.* For what have we to do with *Hypotheſes?* I hope an arbitrary, fictitious Scheme is not to be impoſed upon mankind, inſtead of clear and ſatisfactory proof; eſpecially in a Caſe of ſuch Conſequence as this is! And therefore, if they could ſet that affair in ever ſo pretty a Light, in the way of *May-be's* and *Peradventures*; yet, if they do not come to Realities and plain Fact, we have no more to ſay. Nor are they to be heard any otherwiſe than we would hear ſome romantick Philoſopher, who ſhould offer us the fictions of his own Brain, inſtead of truth and experiment, for the ſolving of a difficulty in *Nature.*

But to proceed:

Secondly, It is evident, *That the* Deiſts *cannot object againſt the Doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection; *that the thing itſelf is abſurd and contradictory, and ſo could not poſſibly have been brought about upon that account.* They have no room nor ſcope to urge any thing of this kind.

Nor can they argue, *That it was any way unfit and indecent, or any more unbecoming the moral perfections of GOD to permit or allow of, than it was beyond the reach of his Wiſdom and Power to effect.* And having demonſtrated this already in a place by itſelf, there will be no occaſion to inſiſt any farther on that Point neither.

And, indeed, I could wiſh that all the Controverſy between the *Chriſtians* and theſe Gentlemen was reduced only to one of the heads now mentioned; and that they would pick out, and ſtand by one of theſe three, as a Point on which they would lay the ſtreſs of the Cauſe, *viz. Either the Impoſſibility or the Unfitneſs of the Thing; or the fraudulent management of the Diſciples.* But

But I fear they will not bring matters ſo near to an iſſue as this comes to.

SECT. LX.

I Muſt beg pardon now, If I ſay, that I think there can be but one thing more behind to be offered as a difficulty. I would by no means be thought to limit the fancy and invention of other men; or to ſuppoſe that they can ſay no more than I ſay for them. But I ſpeak of objections that carry ſomething of a tolerable face with them, and court the Underſtanding to a little attention. Otherwiſe, indeed, there is ſcope enough in this, or any other Queſtion whatſoever, to gratify an obſtinate, diſputing humour; and people that are fond of talking out of the Bounds of juſt Argument, may find matter to talk upon, till they have wearied themſelves, and all the World about them.

But the buſineſs is this; and, I dare ſay, it is a point our *Deiſts* will not deny; but they ſometimes think of, and fancy we are not a little perplexed how to get over it. *Why was not the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *as open and publick a thing as his Death? Why did he not come out of the Grave in the face of all the World, that people might have been ſatisfied by their own Eyes that he was indeed miraculouſly raiſed? Or if he had but ſhewn himſelf in publick, and converſed with mankind as freely and commonly as he did before, there could have been no Diſpute in the Caſe, and all men would have believed on him. But inſtead of this, here are only his Diſciples and ſome few others, who pretend to have ſeen and converſed with him for ſome days, and then declare, that at the end of that time he aſcended up into Heaven.*

I remember, that the *Jews*, among other inſults offered to our Saviour in his Agonies on the Croſs, propoſed an experiment not much unlike to this.

Thou

Thou that deſtroyeſt the Temple, and buildeſt it in three days, ſave thy ſelf. —— *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Croſs.*

And it was not the common people only who did this, but the chief Prieſts and Elders joined with them in the ſame Mockery. *He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave.* —— *If he be the King of* Iſrael, *let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe him.*

Theſe people were for a publick experiment of our Saviour's Power and Divinity; and offered to believe, provided he would but extricate himſelf at that moment in the eyes of all the people. And the *Deiſts*, whoſe demands run every whit as high, would be contented to believe, if the *Reſurrection* had but been a publick ſpectacle, or *Chriſt Jeſus* had ſhewn himſelf in places of common reſort, preaching and teaching the people as he uſed to do before his Crucifixion. This, it ſeems, would have been full conviction to them! For they could have taken the *Jews* word for it, *that he really did do ſo*; and notwithſtanding *the doubtful and precarious nature of human teſtimony*, would have ſubſcribed to the evidence, if it had but been thus fairly repreſented to them.

But let us examine this matter a little.

SECT. LXI.

IF our Saviour's not riſing publickly, or not appearing in the face of the World after his *Reſurrection*, be a juſt and and real ground of exception to theſe Gentlemen; they muſt then make uſe of it one or other of theſe ways.

Firſt, *They muſt take it either as a direct and concluſive argument; or, at leaſt, as a ground of very ſhrewd ſuſpicion, that he did not riſe from the dead at all.*

Or, *Secondly*, They muſt reaſon thus: *That it would have been every way better and more advantageous, with reſpect*

reſpect to the conviction, and conſequently the general good of mankind, if Chriſt Jeſus *had in his own perſon given ſome publick and undeniable proofs of his being alive again after his death upon the croſs, which was ſo notorious to all the world at that Time.*

One or other of theſe muſt needs be their meaning, if they have any objection at all to make upon this ſcore. And I make no doubt to ſhew, *That no Inference can be made, with any tolerable good ſenſe, either way.*

SECT. LXII.

FIRST of all, I think we may be pretty ſecure, *That they will not offer this to us as a direct concluſive argument.*

Becauſe it will be extremely hard to juſtify ſuch a conſequence as this: *Chriſt Jeſus did not ſhew himſelf in publick; therefore he did not riſe from the dead: The generality of the people did not ſee and converſe with him, as was uſual before his death; therefore his Diſciples, nor no others did do ſo.*

I take it for granted they will not reaſon thus.

But then I ſay further, they cannot urge this neither, as any ground of rational ſuſpicion, *That our Saviour's* Reſurrection *was not real, but the mere fiction of his Diſciples.* For tho' we could give no account at all of the matter; yet an *infinitely wiſe Being*, who does not ſee things in our falſe lights, nor judge of them in that fond and partial way that we do, might ſee it beſt and fitteſt, for reaſons known only to himſelf, to order the matter ſo, *That this wonderful event ſhould not be brought about in ſo open and pompous a manner, as in our ſhallow ſchemes we may imagine it ought to have been.*

They will ſay, perhaps, *That this is all but ſuppoſition and ſurmiſe; and that we only tell them of what GOD may ſee fit to do, upon ſome occult and myſterious reaſons, which*

we

we have nothing to do to meddle with, and therefore ought not to argue upon them.

Very well; let it paſs for granted at preſent, *That this is but* Hypotheſis *and Conjecture.* Pray is not this enough to confront a ſuſpicion with? We are talking now about their ſuſpicion, *That* Chriſt *did not riſe, becauſe he did not appear in publick.* For I have ſhewn already, *That there is no inference to be made in the way of direct argumentation*; ſo that there is nothing left for us to conſider in the caſe but a bare ſuſpicion. And if we go no farther than bare ſurmiſe in our reaſonings, but let the matter reſt there; I cannot ſee what they can demand farther, nor what reaſon there is to expect poſitive argument, where there is nothing but pure doubt and diſtruſt oppoſed on the other ſide.

However, if I ſhew, *That what I alledge here is not mere* Hypotheſis *and Conjecture, but ſomething ſupported by experience and plain matter of fact*; then I hope, this ſuſpicion of theirs muſt vaniſh, and ſtand for nothing; at leaſt, unleſs they can find reaſons that ſhall be, in all reſpects, of equal value and authority to ſupport it. That is, they muſt produce reaſons founded upon as plain and clear matter of fact and experience, to juſtify them in ſuſpecting, *That* Chriſt *did not riſe from the dead, becauſe he did not ſhew himſelf publickly after his* (pretended) *Reſurrection:* as I am obliged to produce, in order to ſhew, *That Almighty God might not ſee fit to gratify us with ſo publick a demonſtration of the truth and reality of our Saviour's* Reſurrection, *as we might think would have been the moſt ſerviceable and advantageous to mankind.*

This, I think, is ſtating the matter faily on both ſides: And therefore I ſhall proceed directly to the work incumbent on me; leaving theſe Gentlemen to take care of their own part: Which they muſt do to very good purpoſe, or otherwiſe quite give up their ſuſpicion in the preſent caſe.

SECT.

SECT. LXIII.

NOW in order to this, I muſt conſider what force there is in that other reaſoning of theirs, *viz. That the great Ends of the conviction and ſatisfaction of the World, and conſequently of GOD's Glory in the propagation of the Goſpel, and ſalvation of mankind, would have been far more effectually obtained, if* Jeſus Chriſt *had ſhewn himſelf as openly and familiarly amongſt men after his Death, as he uſed to do before.* For ſince matters were not ordered thus, they think they have ſcope enough to conclude the whole ſtory to be a mere jeſt, and that upon this pretence, *viz. That it is not to be imagined, that an infinitely wiſe and good Being ſhould not take the moſt direct and effectual methods, both for the advancement of his own Glory, and the Good of mankind.*

And they are certainly in the right of it, when they argue, *That GOD Almighty would be ſure to chuſe the propereſt methods for the advancement of his own Glory, and the happineſs of his Creatures.* Not that I think they are in reality much concerned about that matter, becauſe I firmly believe, and indeed it is ſcarce poſſible, but that ſome very mean and little notions of the Divine Being muſt be at the bottom of that ſo vigorous and warm oppoſition to *Chriſtianity*, which theſe Gentlemen make. However, this may ſerve them for a pretence in the way of Argument; and for that reaſon I am obliged to have as much regard to it, as if they ſpoke the very ſenſe of their hearts, and had the moſt becoming notions of GOD imaginable. And upon the ſame ſcore likewiſe, they lie as open to our Arguments, as they would do if they had really the ſame thoughts of the Divine Power, Wiſdom, Omnipreſence, Goodneſs, Holineſs and Truth, which the *Chriſtians* themſelves have: For ſince they pretend to have the ſame in the main, it is one and the

ſame thing, in the way of reaſoning, as if they had; becauſe we can proceed only upon the bottom of what Men pretend to, and muſt draw our conſequences accordingly.

SECT. LXIV.

LET them therefore reſolve this Queſtion: *Would it not be infinitely eaſy for the ſupreme Being to diſcover himſelf with ſo much brightneſs to the World, that no part of mankind ſhould ever doubt of his exiſtence, or form a wrong notion of his glorious perfections, or worſhip and ſerve him in a profane and irreverent, or a ridiculous and fantaſtical manner.*

By what theſe Gentlemen themſelves profeſs to know and believe of the nature of GOD, they cannot think that the barbarous rites and cuſtoms of the *Pagan* world are either agreeable to, or any way worthy of him; that he ſhould think himſelf honoured by ſuch a Jargon of impertinent ceremonies, or be pleaſed to ſee Mankind pour out one another's blood at his Altars; that he delights to be thought of ſo oddly and indecently by the various people of the World, who do not glorify him as GOD, but abound in vain and fooliſh imaginations, *changing his glory into an image made like to corruptible man, to birds and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things.*

In a word, whatever wrong notions there are of GOD in the world; whatever irregularities and indecencies in worſhip; whatever deviations from *that ſimple and genuine way of ſerving him, according to the principles of pure natural Religion, after theſe Gentlemens own Mode.* How might all theſe evils have been prevented, or at leaſt perfectly cured, by ſome open and publick manifeſtations of GOD to mankind; which he could as eaſily make, as he can bring about any other event whatſoever in the world of nature.

Alas!

Alas! may we ſay, if this were but ſo, What excellent order would the World be in? What reverence and devout regard to that GOD, who ſhould thus convincingly diſcover himſelf, would there be in all places? The Fool that now ſays in his heart, *There is no God*, would then think after quite another manner. And thoſe Fools likewiſe, who ſay, *The Lord has forſaken the Earth*, and neither minds nor cares what is done by the children of men, would be ſtruck with an awful ſenſe of his preſence, and inſpection of their ways. Pure Religion and Virtue, Harmony and Peace, would flouriſh and abound all the World over; and thereby an infinite deal of miſchief and diſorder be prevented, upon this *Hypotheſis*, according to our beſt judgment and apprehenſion of things. What a fine Scheme is this? If we, poor ſhallow Beings, might be allowed to argue, and draw up our own propoſals for the regulation of the World; what delicate Syſtems, in our own conceit, ſhould we compoſe?

But let us tremble at the thoughts of that Preſumption, of calling the Ways of GOD, our Supreme Lord and Sovereign, into queſtion.

We dare not ſo much as think it would have been better, if he had ordered matters thus, with reſpect to the whole race of mankind, than now it is, and ſhall be, even tho' he is pleaſed to permit ſo much confuſion and diſorder at preſent. And therefore it is infallibly certain, he has infinitely wiſe and holy, and infinitely gracious and good Reaſons too, in this particular diſpenſation to the World. But thoſe Reaſons are above us, and we muſt not enquire. His Ways are unſearchable, and his Judgments paſt finding out. As the Heavens are high above the earth; ſo are all his Thoughts and Ways above ours. We may highly diſhonour and diſpleaſe him by our curioſity; but we can never give ourſelves the leaſt ſatisfaction by it. Our buſineſs is to be humble and modeſt; to look after things that are *plain* and *revealed*;

and leave all *ſecret* things to GOD, to whom alone they belong.

SECT LXV.

NOW from hence we proceed to argue thus: *If the great Ends of GOD's Glory, and the Good of mankind, are ſufficiently conſulted and provided for, as we know for certain they are, in this diſpenſation of things; wherein men are obliged to argue from the mere Light of nature and reaſon upon the Works of GOD in the Creation, and thereby form their notions of him, and their duty to him, and what ſort of ſervice they ſhould pay him; tho' at the ſame time it is plain, that in ſo doing they run into infinite abſurdities and inconveniencies, groſsly abuſing human Nature itſelf, and reflecting on the Majeſty of Heaven:* And if they are left thus without any ſuch helps, as *Revelation*, *Prophecy*, *Inſpiration*, or any other ſorts of notices from Heaven, to put them into the right way, and direct them how to glorify GOD as he ſhould be glorified by them, according to the avowed Principles and Notions of our *Deiſts:* In a word, If GOD ſees fit to with-hold all ſuch open demonſtrations of himſelf, as would be a preſent and effectual remedy for all theſe evils; and are as eaſy to him as to make his Sun to ſhine, and his Rain to fall upon this Earth: If theſe things be ſo, *Then how is his Glory or the Good of mankind concerned, tho' the World had not a publick demonſtration of the Truth of* Chriſt's Reſurrection? I deſire they would fairly ſhew us that.

In ſhort, Either the *Deiſts* believe *GOD Almighty to be ſuch a Being, that he does not care how and in what manner he is ſerved by reaſonable Creatures; and provided they do but perform ſome acts of Homage and Devotion to to him, is pleaſed with what they do, let it be ever ſo unſeemly, or ever ſo ridiculous and fantaſtical; and that he matters*

matters not whether they believe his Exiſtence, or have right or wrong notions of his Perfections; and conſequently, that ſuitable notions and apprehenſions of his Nature, or a regular and ſeemly worſhip of him, are of no conſequence at all to the happineſs of mankind: Or elſe they believe the contrary of all this.

If they believe the former, then how can they ever offer to tell us *of the concern of GOD's Glory*, and *the general Good of Mankind*, in the publickneſs of the demonſtration of the truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection?* For, (were it poſſible that the infinitely wiſe and good GOD ſhould be ſuch a ſort of Being as this) pray might he not be as negligent of the affairs of mankind in one Caſe, as in the other? Might he not make the cure for mens disbelief of the Goſpel as little pompous and extraordinary, as that for their Atheiſm, their Blaſphemy, their horrid Idolatry and Superſtition? Let theſe Gentlemen think of That, and tell me which of the divine Perfections is more deeply concerned in one of theſe Caſes than the other.

If they believe the latter, then let them ſhew me how they account for the care, and love, and goodneſs of GOD, and his regard to his own Glory in this preſent diſpenſation towards the World; which is left in ſuch a wretched condition for want of that light which he could ſo eaſily impart to it, even without Miracles: That I may try, whether I cannot upon the very ſame, or upon Principles in all reſpects as juſtifiable, ſhew them how I account for the care, and love, and goodneſs of GOD, and his regard to his own Glory in that other diſpenſation of his Providence towards the World, in not giving ſuch a publick demonſtration of the truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, as ſuch wiſe creatures as we are might think fitting and neceſſary. One of theſe two things they muſt believe, and it is equal to me which of them it is.

SECT. LXVI.

HOwever, if theſe Gentlemen conſidered the matter a little, they would find an exact uniformity and agreement in the ways of GOD in both theſe diſpenſations; I mean with reſpect both to Natural and Revealed Religion. On one ſide they have all his glorious Works in external nature, the Wonders of his providence and government of the World, the admirable frame and conſtitution of their own rational natures; all theſe, to furniſh them with premiſſes for juſt and fitting concluſions concerning the nature of GOD, and the obligations his Creatures lie under to him.

On the other ſide he has ordered matters ſo, that we have all the *Data* requiſite to a ſtrictly rational and convincing evidence; ſo that we can conclude the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* to be true, by all thoſe rules and methods of reaſoning, which we depend upon as juſt and ſound in all other Caſes; and which if they are not ſo, the whole World is nothing elſe but mere ſcene and colluſion. But on neither ſide are there ſuch kinds or degrees of appeal to our Senſes, as we in our notions might think the moſt advantageous, nay, and certain, to do the great Work of opening the eyes of all mankind. But as well with reſpect to his own Being and Perfections, as the *Reſurrection* of his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* from the Dead; GOD, having endowed us with moſt excellent powers and faculties, has thought fit to leave us to exerciſe and employ them in the drawing ſuch concluſions about theſe matters, as the Laws of our own reaſonable natures put us upon making, from the *Data* or Premiſſes he preſents us with, in the nature of things abroad. And thus he obliges us to act as men, and makes our Faith to be, in all Senſes, a moſt rational Duty. Not that we are thus abſolutely given up into our own hands,

ſo

ſo that the ſucceſs depends ſolely and entirely upon our own application. For as GOD is ſo merciful and compaſſionate, that he will expect no more of us, than the powers and helps, and favourable circumſtances he places us in, will enable us to perform; ſo he is ready to ſuperadd ſpecial grace and aſſiſtance to all the ordinary advantages he affords us, for the clearing up of our doubts, and helping us to ſurmount the difficulties that lie in our way; provided we be but tractable and induſtrious, and do what creatures, ſo made as we are, ought to do and may do by common helps alone, without the aſſiſtance of that extraordinary grace to carry us farther.

And thus I have ſaid what I hope may be a full and compleat anſwer to what is or may be alledged by the *Deiſts* concernings the Privacy of our Saviour's *Reſurrection*, or his not appearing to the world in publick as before.

SECT. LXVII.

BUT after all, there are theſe two things ſtiil to be ſaid, which I could wiſh theſe gentlemen would take ſome notice of. And, indeed, it is all the anſwer that need ever be given to this objection of theirs: Only I was willing to trace the matter a little, and by that means ſhew them it is a point they ought never to inſiſt upon, becauſe they can never poſſibly conclude any thing from it.

Firſt, They muſt never pretend to make the *Chriſtians* believe that this is any real difficulty with them; or that they would have been a jot more diſpoſed to have believed the Goſpel, if *Chriſt Jeſus* had ſhewn himſelf ever ſo publickly and familiarly after his *Reſurrection*.

For even in that caſe their belief of the Truth of this great Article of the *Chriſtian Faith* muſt have ſtood upon the very ſame foundation of *Moral Evidence*, that it muſt do now in the preſent Circumſtances.

If every thing had been managed in this affair exactly to their own hearts wiſh, yet ſtill they muſt have had recourſe to thoſe very proofs which they now deſpiſe, and call ridiculous and inſufficient. And who that ſees them explode and run down all evidence of this kind, and, with infinite abſurdity, demand demonſtration for every thing they believe, can be ſo weak as to imagine they would have any manner of regard to it in this caſe? Yes, ſay they, —— *If* Chriſt *had appeared in the temple, and other places of publick reſort, as he uſed to do before his death, the truth of his* Reſurrection *had been plain to every body; and it would have raiſed ſo publick and general a talk in the world, and impreſſed the thing ſo deep on the minds of men, that the belief of it would never have worn out, and no body could have denied it.*

Well argued! *If* Chriſt *had appeared in places of publick reſort*, &c. then ſo and ſo.

But how muſt you have known that he did appear in thoſe places of publick reſort? You ſee the matter ſticks there, and there it will ſtick.

Pray how ſhould you *Deiſts*, who live ſeventeen hundred years after all this, come to be aſſured, that there were ſuch familiar appearances of *Chriſt*; that there was ſuch a general talk, ſuch a prevailing conviction, ſuch a firm perſuaſion of the truth of the thing at that time? You pretend you would have believed, if it had been ſo: But how would you have ſatisfied your ſelves that it was ſo? Muſt you not have done the very ſame thing then that you muſt do now, if you ever believe the *Chriſtian Religion?* that is, *Examine the accounts of witneſſes, ſearch into their characters and qualifications, and at laſt depend upon their teſtimony as true, when you have found it to have all the marks of rational credibility?*

Whatever evidence, whatever convincing proofs of the reality of our Saviour's *Reſurrection*, mankind at that time might have; yet, with reſpect to you at this time, all the advantage and efficacy of that proof ſtands

ſtands upon the ſame foundation exactly, that the force and efficacy of the proof, which we offer you now in the preſent circumſtances, does ſtand upon. And therefore, upon the ſame ſcore that you pretend to be diſſatisfied, and plead the uncertainty and precarious nature of the evidence you now have for the truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, you might and you muſt have been diſſatisfied with the evidence offered you in thoſe other circumſtances. For evidences of the ſame nature, and conveyed after one and the ſame manner, muſt and will have the ſame ſort of effect. And conſequently, all your talk upon this head is but jeſt; and you *act a part*, when you tell us you ſhould have believed, if things had been thus and thus.

And to put this yet farther, if poſſible, out of diſpute, I will ſhew you, that you can be unbelievers, in caſes that were actually as publick and notorious, as you pretend you could wiſh the *Reſurrection* had been.

SECT. LXVIII.

FOR, *Secondly*, you reject all the miracles of *Chriſt Jeſus*. And it is not credible, that you would have had regard to any teſtimonies concerning the *Reſurrection*, when you make ſo very light of all the accounts of thoſe wonderful works of our Saviour; which, had they been lyes and forgeries, it is demonſtrable, *That* Chriſtianity *muſt have been hooted out of the world many ages ago.*

You will not believe, tho' it ſtands atteſted in ſuch records, as you have none any way comparable to them for the truth of any thing elſe that you believe,----*That* Jeſus Chriſt *went about all* Galilee, *teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſes amongſt the people.* ----*That his fame went throughout all* Syria, *and the regions*

regions round about; and they brought unto him all ſick people, that were taken with divers diſeaſes and torments, and thoſe who were poſſeſſed with Devils, and thoſe who were Lunatick, and thoſe who had the Palſy; and he healed them. ----*That great multitudes followed him, and ſought to touch him; and there went Virtue out of him, and he healed them all.* ----*That when the inhabitants of a country had notice of his approach, they publiſhed it thro' all the region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was; and whereſoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or countries, they laid the Sick in the ſtreets, and beſought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his Garment; and as many as touched him were made whole.* -----*That he wrought theſe Wonders in the preſence of the Phariſees and Doctors of the Law, who came out of every town of* Galilee *and* Judea; *and did themſelves partake of the ſalutary effects of his Power, and were amazed, and glorified GOD, and being filled with fear, cried out, They had ſeen,* παράδοξα, *ſtrange and unaccountable things.*

You will not believe theſe matters upon Teſtimony, tho' declared to be done in the moſt open and publick manner imaginable.

Even when you are told, *That the multitude proclaimed the wonderful Works of* Chriſt Jeſus; *that they glorified GOD, who had given ſuch Power to man; cried out, aſtoniſhed, He hath done all things well, he maketh the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to ſpeak,* &c. *and with authority he commandeth the unclean Spirits, and they come forth:* Nay, tho' great numbers of thoſe who beheld his Works actually believed on him, and became his Followers, declaring to all men, that *GOD had now viſited his people, and that a great Prophet was riſen up amongſt them.*

You are not moved with thoſe many appeals which the Apoſtles did, with the utmoſt confidence and aſſurance, make to the World concerning the truth of theſe Facts;

Facts; tho' they did it ever ſo publickly, and referred to them as things commonly known, and paſſed undiſputed every where. *Jeſus of Nazareth*, ſays St. Peter, ſpeaking to a very numerous aſſembly, *was a man approved of GOD amongſt you, by Miracles and Wonders, and Signs, which GOD wrought by him in the midſt of you; as you yourſelves alſo know.* And in another place, *You know* (the τὸ γενόμενον ῥῆμα) *the thing that was done throughout all* Judea, *&c.* viz. *How GOD anointed* Jeſus *of* Nazareth *with the Holy Ghoſt and with Power; who went about doing Good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil, for GOD was with him.*

Now this had been the moſt prodigious degree of Folly and Stupidity that men could ever have been guilty of, if the facts they appealed to had not been notorious, and impoſſible ever to be denied with any face of modeſty and truth.

And accordingly you find, or may find if you pleaſe, that there never was an Unbeliever of the Old Times, who ever dared ſolemnly to diſpute, or call the Truth of them in queſtion, but they all owned, and took them for granted.

And as it is certain they would never have done this, if they had had a proſpect of any poſſible ſucceſs from their attempts to render the facts themſelves queſtionable; ſo it is plain, that all their little ſhuffling endeavours to eclipſe the reputation of them were the genuine effects of the ſame Cauſe. It was this Conviction that put them upon thoſe pitiful and wretched Evaſions, to ſolve the buſineſs ſomething tolerably to the unthinking part of mankind, and excuſe themſelves from the imputation of downright irrational Infidelity.

We have obſerved before what a ſort of account *Julian* gave of theſe matters to the World.

Nor does *Celſus* ſolve them a jot better, but rather worſe, if poſſible: For by ſuppoſing our Saviour to have made

made uſe of * *Magick Arts* in the working of his Miracles, he takes all the Facts themſelves for granted, and plainly ſhews they were ſuch as the World made no queſtion of the truth of.

And the *Jews* likewiſe, who ſometimes aſcribed thoſe Miracles to the Virtue of the שם כג ארבע אותיות, the *Nomen quatuor literarum*, at other times thought fit to aſcribe them to the ſame arts of *Incantation*, as *Origen* expreſsly tells us.

And thoſe who ſet up *Workers of Miracles and Prodigies in the Heathen World*, in oppoſition to *Jeſus Chriſt*; did evidently allow the truth of what he did, by thoſe very endeavours to find out ſome to match him.

I ſay, they were certainly apprized of the truth of the things themſelves. Otherwiſe † *Hierocles* would never have talked of thoſe ὀλίγαι τερατείαι, for which our Saviour was reckoned to be a God in the *Chriſtian* World. Nor would others of them have made ſuch a blunder, as to ſay, that their *Apuleius*, ‖ *Apollonius*, and others beſides, did things as great, or even greater, than our *Jeſus*.

In a word, there could be no douht amongſt mankind in thoſe days, whether *Chriſt Jeſus* did really per-

* Κατηγορεῖ δ' ἐν τοῖς ἑξῆς καὶ τῶν Σωτῆρος, ὡς γοητείᾳ δυνηθεντος ἃ ἔδοξε παράδοξα πεποιηκέναι. Orig. adv. Celſ. *lib.* 1. *pag.* 7.

And again,—— Ἀυτὸν Ἰησοῦν, σκόπον τραφέντα, μισθαρνήσοντα, εἰς Ἄγυπτον δυνάμεων τινων πειραθέντα, ἐκεῖθεν ἐπανελθεῖν, Θεὸν δὲ ἐκείνας τὰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτὸν αναγορεύοντα. Lib. prædict.

† Ἡμεῖς μὲν τοιαῦτα πεποιηκότα οὐ θεὸν ἀλλὰ θεοῖς κεχαρισμένον ἄνδρα ἡγούμεθα ὁι δὲ δὶ ὀλίγας τερατείας τινας, τὸν Ἰησοῦν θεὸν ἀναγορεύουσι. Hierocl. de Philoſtr. apud Euſeb. adverſ. Hierocl.

‖ *Nil amplius Dominum Jeſum, quam alii homines facere potuerunt, feciſſe vel geſſiſſe mentiuntur:* Apollonium *ſiquidem ſuum nobis, &* Apuleium, *alioſque Magicæ artis homines in medium proferunt, quorum majora contendunt extitiſſe Miracula.* Marcell. Epiſt. 4. ad Auguſt.

form

form ſuch aſtoniſhing Works or no; ſince the *Chriſtians* ſo frequently and openly appealed to the *publick Acts and Monuments of the Roman Empire*, in which they were recorded. Thus ſome of the antient Apologiſts † referred to the *Acts of Pontius Pilate*, and the account given by him concerning our Saviour to the Emperor *Tiberius*. Which appeals, had they not had viſible and notorious matter of fact to have ſupported them; the *Acta* themſelves, or ſome very authentick Copies of them, being as eaſy to be produced, as they were readily quoted; *Chriſtianity* would have needed no worſe blow, than ſuch Apologies (which were not made to overturn, but to vindicate and defend it) would certainly have given it.

So that now I ſay, whatever elſe is to be alledged againſt the Miracles of *Chriſt Jeſus*, it is plain, that underhand management and ſecrecy can never be objected. They were all done in the open Light, in the face of the Sun; while multitudes of all comers, enemies and friends, foreigners and natives, learned and unlearned, looked on, and beheld with Wonder.

Yes, they will ſay,—— But the Queſtion is, *Whether all this was not Juggle and Legerdemain; either mere ſlight and artifice, or elſe the peoples Senſes ſome way or other impoſed upon, with fiction and ſhew, inſtead of realities?*

Anſw. There can be no ſence againſt extravagant ſuppoſitions and ſurmiſes. When men reaſon, they are under ſome Laws and Rules; but when they come to doubt and query, and ſuppoſe, without any manner of ground or occaſion for ſo doing, from the nature and

† Tertul. Apol. c. 21. & 5.
I am ſenſible theſe Acts of Pilate *are called in queſtion. But tho' there be nothing of that kind now in the World; yet that there were in reality ſuch genuine* Acta *once in being, I believe is not reaſonably to be doubted. For it appears from* Euſebius, Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib. 9. *that there were ſome falſe and ſpurious* Acts *ſet about, in order to ſink the Credit of the true ones. And* Epiphanius de Quartadecimanis *mentions, I think, ſome Appeals made by Heretick's to theſe* Acta Pilati.

circum-

circumſtances of things, they as good as declare to all the World, that they will not be dealt with in the way of argument: And by ſo doing, they ſhew plainly enough upon what foot it is the Controverſy ſtands.

But if they could once venture to let themſelves be guided by that, which mankind have agreed to call ſincere and unprejudiced Reaſon; they would ſoon renounce all thoſe little refuges and evaſions, and forbear to make a defence ſo very trivial in a matter of ſuch grand Importance.

In the mean time we cannot have have ſo little an opinion of the underſtanding of theſe Gentlemen, as to imagine, that whatever they ſay, they do in good earneſt believe——

That Perſons afflicted with the moſt tormenting maladies and diſeaſes, ſhould be juggled into perfect eaſe and health, and cured by mere Legerdemain.

That blind men ſhould ſee, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb ſpeak, lepers be cleanſed, and dead men come to life, by mere fancy and imagination.

Or that the ſenſes of whole multitudes ſhould be impoſed upon to ſuch a degree, that they ſhould all fancy together, they ſaw, heard, ſpake, eat and drank, and repeated theſe actions many times over, and that in different places and circumſtances too; and yet after all, did nothing of all this, but were either aſleep, or in an extaſy, or under the power of ſome Charm or Witchcraft all the while.

For Example: *That five thouſand men at one time, and four thouſand at another,* beſides Women and Children, *ſhould perſuade themſelves they fed only upon a* few Loaves and Fiſhes, *and ſhould publiſh it to all the Country that they did do ſo, and refer them to time, place, and perſons preſent, and yet all the while in reality have been at a magnificent feaſt, where plenty and variety of all proviſions, fit to entertain ſuch vaſt multitudes, was ſet before them.*

If theſe things may be ſo, what are the ſenſes of mankind good for? Or how are they ever to be depended

pended upon? Or who will or can ever believe a *Deiſt*, atteſting any thing as matter of ſenſe and experience; when, by his own principles, people cannot believe their ſenſes; no, not thouſands of them together, and that in the moſt common and vulgar actions of human life?

Indeed, if it were in a matter any thing remote and out of the way, or that required nice reaſon and philoſophy for people to aſſure themſelves of, there might be ſome room for a difficulty to be ſtarted; but when it comes ſo low as to *eating and drinking, to the diſtinguiſhing of foods, and knowing that a man has this, and not the other thing before him; or that he has only ſo much, and not a quantity ten thouſand times greater:* Then if men cannot be allowed to make uſe of their eyes and taſte, ſo as to be out of all doubt whether things be ſo or no, as thoſe ſenſes repreſent them, we had even as good be without them, and ſay, *That GOD Almighty has endowed us with deceitful and precarious faculties, that can never be of any ſervice to us; and ſo quit all pretenſions to the uſe of them for the time to come.*

In ſhort, there are but theſe following concluſions poſſibly to be made in the caſe, and a man muſt of neceſſity come to one or other of them, and he can come but to one.

Either, Firſt, *Theſe accounts of the miracles of* Chriſt Jeſus *were abſolute fictions in their very principle and foundation; he never pretending or attempting to do any of thoſe mighty works in publick which are reported of him, but was only falſly ſaid to do ſo by ſome who had a mind to impoſe upon mankind.*

Or, Secondly, *That he did not work any true miracles; but the peoples ſenſes were ſome way or other abuſed, ſo that they believed he really did work miracles, when in truth he did not.*

Or, Thirdly, *That the ſpectators were not any way deluded, and knew very well he wrought no miracles; but were*

were all (both enemies and friends; nay, the very *Jews* themſelves, who daily ſought occaſions againſt him) *united in a cloſe confederacy to make the World believe that he did do the ſtrangeſt and moſt ſurprizing things. So that while ſome blazed the report of them abroad, the reſt kept their counſel, and never offered to diſcover the Trick; but managed the matter with ſo much craft, and ſuch an exact harmonious correſpondence amongſt themſelves, that the ſtory ſhould go current about that* Jeſus Chriſt *was a worker of Miracles and Prodigies, and no body ever be able to diſprove it.*

Or elſe, Fourthly, *That* Chriſt Jeſus *did really perform theſe wonderful works, and that the accounts given of them by the* Chriſtian *Writers are true.*

This is all that can be concluded with reſpect to the preſent affair. And he that does not conclude the *laſt*, will find but ſmall odds which ſoever of the other *three* he chuſes. For——

It will be a very difficult and arduous undertaking, to ſhew, *That there is nothing but mere Romance and Forgery in all thoſe accounts we have of the Miracles of* Jeſus Chriſt.

And for theſe Gentlemen to bring their own ſenſes off, with any tolerable reputation, after ſuch a ſcandal thrown upon the ſenſes of mankind in general, by ſuppoſing multitudes of people together to be impoſed upon in ſome of the moſt common actions of Life; and that not for once or twice, but in a continued ſeries, for years together: I ſay, to do this ſolidly and well, I believe will not be a task leſs difficult than the former.

Nor will it be leſs than either of the other two, to ſet in a clear light that ſtrange Confederacy, by which ſuch numbers of people, ſo variouſly affected, tempered and principled, were all linked together in one common deſign of keeping the matter to themſelves, and baffling all the artifices and endeavours of the reſt of mankind;

mankind; ſome of whom lay under all the obligations that men could poſſibly lie under to enquire into the true ſtate of the Caſe, and ſatisfy themſelves effectually whether *Chriſt Jeſus* was an Impoſtor or no.

And thus I have ſhewn for what Reaſons the *Chriſtians believe*, that how publick ſoever the appearances of *Chriſt Jeſus* after his *Reſurrection* had been, yet their adverſaries would ſtill have made matter of Cavil and Exception; and, in a word, have been the very ſame Unbelievers that now they are.

I ſhall be ready to own a breach of Charity, when I find it is proved to be one: In the mean time I have ſhewn them our Reaſons for it.

And this was the *Firſt* of thoſe two things I offered to propoſe, to cut off all their Objection upon this Head.

SECT. LXIX.

BUT, *Secondly*, Theſe Gentlemen ſhould remember, *That all this talk about our Saviour's publick Appearance after his* Reſurrection *is quite from the main Point in hand.*

For our great concern is about the *Reſurrection* itſelf; whether it were true in Fact or no: Whether *Chriſt* did really riſe from the Dead, or was only falſly and deceitfully ſaid and reported to do ſo. And therefore, if there be ſufficient evidence to make that Point clear, we are not concerned about his ſhewing, or not ſhewing himſelf openly to the World; nor have we any thing to do to offer Reaſons either one way or the other. Let us keep to the great Queſtion that lies before us, and not fly off to a circumſtance that is of little ſignificancy, and from whence it is demonſtrable nothing is to be inferred. The buſineſs is, have we evidence, or have we not? Are the proofs we go upon concluſive, or are they not? Let us decide this Point, and then all is decided. It is

here that the ſtreſs of the matter will lie; and hither muſt be our laſt reſort. If the evidence be good by all the Laws of Human Nature; I do not care for ten thouſand difficulties, if they were ever ſo inſuperable, provided they are not ſuch as infer ſimple impoſſibility, or palpable abſurdity. When I am ſure of Fact, I am ſure of all that is of any moment to me. Indeed, if I have ſufficient *Data* to argue out more, well and good; if not, I will hold faſt the main point, and bid defiance to all Objections whatſoever. And therefore, if theſe Gentlemen amuſed the World with ſtarting ever ſo many odd queries and ſurmiſes about *why* and *how*, and *to what purpoſe*, and all the other modes and circumſtances they can poſſibly think of, with reſpect to this matter of our Saviour's *Reſurrection*; and if they were ſo intricate and perplexed that I could not diſcover the fallacy, or demonſtrate the abſurdity of any one of them all, (the very reverſe of which is apparently true, as to any of their Objections, from what topick ſoever derived) yet *with circumſtances of convincing evidence, according to the nature of things, for the truth of the Fact*; I ſhould be at a certainty: nor would all thoſe difficulties give me the leaſt degree of uneaſineſs.

SECT. LXX.

PErhaps theſe Gentlemen may think, *A man would do very ill to make no more of inſolvable difficulties attending a matter of Belief; and therefore, notwithſtanding the evidence talked of, for the proof of the thing, it may be, they call his Belief in ſuch a caſe, by the ill names of* Credulity, *and* Bigotry, *or* obſtinate Reſolution *to believe things only of his own ſide.*

But they muſt not do thus; for if they do, the charge will come home upon themſelves; and they will, without remedy, be proved, by their own rule, to be credulous

dulous and bigotted beyond example. The *Chriſtians* will not be obnoxious in this caſe, becauſe they do not form any ſuch notions of bigotry and credulity; ſo that all the burden of the argument will lie upon themſelves, and they will not find it eaſy fairly to throw it off.

I ſuppoſe theſe Gentlemen, ſome of them at leaſt, cannot but know that there are abundance of problems in *Phyſical* matters, the ſolutions of which are reckoned deſperate, even by thoſe who are the moſt ſeen in thoſe ſtudies. Indeed, to ſpeak the plain truth of the matter, there is ſcarce any thing at all in nature which we do know the *modus* of, or can explain from its firſt principles. *Motion* itſelf in general, *Gravitation*, *Senſation*, the *Formation of an Animal Body*, are demonſtrably above all ſolution by any mechanical laws whatſoever. And to enter into a detail of particular Phænomena that are ſo likewiſe, would be an endleſs work. In a word, all our knowledge of the univerſe is but a collection of ſome particular circumſtances of fact, with the conſequences reſulting from them; ſome of which lie nearer, and others more remote from view; without any penetrating or looking into the prime cauſes and reaſons of them.

Now I would ask of theſe perſons, Whether they can ſatisfy our demands here, and ſhew the exact *modus* and *ratio* of all, or any of thoſe appearances in nature which were juſt now mentioned? Can they ſolve all the difficulties that ſhall be propoſed to them upon thoſe heads?

I take it for granted they will ſay *they cannot*; nor is there any great degree of modeſty in confeſſing ſuch ignorance.

Very well: But notwithſtanding this confeſſed ignorance, and inability to ſolve the difficulties of theſe appearances, you are fully aſſured of the truth and reality of them: You do not think the exiſtence of them is queſtionable, becauſe you find it impoſſible to account for the *modus* and *ratio* of them.

No, they will eaſily allow that.

I ask then, in the next place, *Are not you* Deiſts, *who lay down ſuch a rule as this, wretched bigots by your own principles?* Are not you obſtinate and credulous beyond all men, to ſtand ſo peremptorily to the truth of thouſands and thouſands of things, when you cannot ſolve the leaſt difficulty belonging to any of them all?

No, they will ſay: *For the things you are now talking of, are plain and evident matter of fact to our ſenſes; and no difficulties whatſoever can be of any conſideration in ſuch a caſe as that.*

Our eyes tell us, *That bodies do gravitate and move; that ſuch ſort of beings as thoſe which are called animals, do actually exiſt and perform their operations; and therefore, tho' we can give no anſwer to all the myſterious queſtions that may be propoſed upon theſe and other heads; yet becauſe the things themſelves are obvious to ſenſe, ſo that we are ſure of the reality of them; for this reaſon we have no regard to the difficulties that may poſſibly be urged, with reſpect to the Modus or Reaſons of them.*

Who would not think now, at firſt ſight, that there was really ſomething very pertinent and ſtrong in this reply? It ſeems to leave a man under a ſort of neceſſity of concluding, or at leaſt very handſomely to incline and diſpoſe him to conclude, *That tho' in matters of plain ſenſe we may fairly overlook difficulties that are impoſſible to be ſolved, yet that in ſome other caſes inſuperable difficulties may be grounded enough for calling the truth of things in queſtion; and it may be fond credulity to believe them, notwithſtanding the evidence offered for the proof of their being real and certain.*

If this be not the meaning of it, it has no meaning at all, that is any way contrary to what I have been advancing. For if inſuperable difficulties are not a ſufficient ground for calling in queſtion the truth of ſome things, for which notwithſtanding we have all the evidence that the intrinſick nature of thoſe things does allow

allow of; then I was right in ſaying, *That the ſtreſs of all our diſpute lying upon the point of evidence, it was no matter if there were ever ſo many perplexed and intricate queſtions ſtarted about it, which we could give no manner of anſwer to.*

And I was in the right likewiſe in aſſerting, *That it was not bigotry and credulity firmly to adhere to the belief of a thing, tho' attended with ſuch difficulties; when there was ſuch evidence for it, as in the nature of things is juſt and proper for a matter of that kind.*

And conſequently, the reply carries nothing along with it that thwarts any thing which I have laid down.

But, on the other hand, if that be the true ſcope and meaning of it which I have repreſented; then, I ſay, it is abſolutely falſe, and is fit to ſatisfy none but thoſe that will be ſatisfied with Sophiſtry and Paralogiſm.

The proof of which is thus plainly made out.

For ſince, by PROP. IX. PART II. the intrinſick difference, in the natures of thoſe things which are the objects of our knowledge, infers a proportional neceſſary difference in our methods of proving, or aſſuring ourſelves of the truth of them: ſince alſo, *by virtue of the conſtitution of the world, and the circumſtances of human nature therein, we are under a ſtrict neceſſity of aſſenting to ſome things as true, upon bare* moral proof; *as well as of aſſenting to rigorous demonſtration, or believing the teſtimony of our ſenſes:* Laſtly, ſince it is equally inconſiſtent with the perfections of GOD Almighty, and therefore equally impoſſible, that he ſhould give a deluſion in any caſe whatſoever, that has all the evidence which the nature of things requires; that he ſhould impoſe upon our underſtandings, in a caſe of *moral proof*, any more than make all our *Mathematical* demonſtrations to be falſe and wrong, or that our ſenſes ſhould give us a quite contrary account of things to what they really are: ſince it is as contrary to his juſtice, goodneſs, and veracity, to do the one of theſe, as the other; *Therefore*

when in any caſe whatſoever we have ſuch evidence for the truth of things, as is agreeable to matters of that rank and order; and when we have all that evidence likewiſe, which the intrinſick nature and condition of thoſe things do require or allow of, we are under a direct and poſitive obligation to aſſent to thoſe things as true and real, and to ſtand by them as ſuch, if there were ever ſo many difficulties attending them, and thoſe ever ſo inſolvable.

And this irrefragably demonſtrates the vanity of all that plauſible talk on the other ſide, and ſhews it to be but talk.

So that now I muſt tell theſe Gentlemen, that thoſe inſtances of the myſterious problems in nature are valid and good; and that their pretence of overlooking thoſe difficulties, *upon the obviouſneſs of the things themſelves to ſenſe*, is nothing but mere amuſement. And therefore thoſe difficulties are to be urged upon them; and they are obliged to ſolve them, if they can, or elſe for ever to give over the talk of bigotry and credulity, where people admit things as true upon plain and rational evidence of fact, tho' at the ſame time the reaſon and *modus* of them are not to be accounted for.

However, all this reaſoning is *ex abundanti*, and to let them ſee how far the utmoſt conſequences they can draw will run. For I think it is ſufficiently plain, that there are no inſolvable difficulties (tho', for the advantage of the argument, we have put the caſe the other way, and ſuppoſed there were) attending the preſent queſtion concerning the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*.

So that, as I ſaid before, all the diſpute centers in this queſtion, *viz. Whether the evidence for the truth of the fact be ſtrictly juſt, and in all reſpects ſufficient to oblige us, as reaſonable creatures, to yield the aſſent of our minds thereto.* And this is the enquiry that now lies before us. And as it is that which crowns and concludes all; ſo I ſhall endeavour to beſtow an anſwerable degree of

care

care in the management of it, that the way to our *great Concluſion* may lie fair and open to us.

SECT. LXXI.

I Come now, therefore, to the *fourth* and *laſt* General Head of the method propoſed, *viz.* To ſhew—— *That there is actually ſuch an Evidence for the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *as does fully come up to all the characters and conditions of an evidence which obliges human Underſtanding:* Or that it is ſuch as lays an indiſpenſible obligation on every capable Subject, to whom that Doctrine is fairly repreſented with its proper evidences, to receive it as a certain Truth.

Two things therefore are here to be done.

Firſt, *We will ſtate, in order, the ſeveral conditions of the evidence we ſpeak of; as what directly obliges the underſtanding of mankind.*

Secondly, *We will demonſtrate, that the evidence we have for the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *does fully come up to thoſe conditions.*

And, I ſuppoſe, this is all that can be demanded reaſonably, in order to a Concluſion.

In order to the *Firſt* of theſe, I muſt refer to what has been ſaid concerning the nature of the evidence here intended at SECT. III. PART II.

I have there given ſuch an account of it, as contains all that is either needful to the preſent purpoſe, or to make any perſon of tolerable underſtanding know what I mean.

So that there is nothing remaining for me to do, with reſpect to that matter, but only to branch out what lies

there ſummed up together into proper Heads for our preſent deſign.

And this I ſhall do in the following Particulars.

Firſt, *This evidence is ſuch, as being impartially weighed and conſidered, by the free uſe of a man's Reaſon, in all the common and allowed ways of uſing it, would more powerfully incline him to the belief of a thing propoſed, than any objections to the contrary, when duly ſtated, and ſet in a juſt light, would diſſuade him from the belief of that thing.*

Secondly, Not only ſo; but it is ſuch likewiſe, *That if a man ſhould reject it, he muſt neceſſarily be forced upon ſuch ſort of conſequences, as the genuine and diſintereſted ſenſe of all mankind would condemn as abſurd and wrong; and which even he himſelf, without making uſe of ſome bad arts for managing his Underſtanding contrary to its native biaſs and tendency, would not be able to digeſt; but muſt diſown as irrational and abſurd, when he came to reflect upon them in a cool and ſerious temper.*

Thirdly, It is ſuch, *as furniſhes a man with all thoſe Media, which, according to the nature of the Caſe propoſed, are neceſſary to the making a perſpicuous natural Concluſion; and by the help of which he may likewiſe ſolve whatever difficulties occur, upon ſuch Principles, as mankind, in all reſembling Caſes, univerſally agree to argue themſelves into a juſt ſatisfaction and aſſurance of the truth of things by.*

This is, in ſhort, the Subſtance of that account. So that the Conditions required therein, and which therefore we muſt ſhew exactly to agree to the evidence we have for the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, are theſe:

The Arguments alledged muſt weigh down whatever Objections are ſtarted on the contrary ſide.

Thoſe

Thoſe Arguments ought to be of ſuch a kind, and ſuch only, as is proper and ſuitable to the nature of the Caſe propoſed.

They ſhould be ſuch, that a man may be made as ſure of the truth of a thing by them, as he ever is or can be in any Caſe of the like nature.

Abſurd and irrational Conſequences muſt be the reſult of the denial of them.

Whatever difficulties are propoſed, may be ſolved upon ſuch Principles as the common practice and conſent of mankind has eſtabliſhed, and to which reſort is always had in Caſes of a ſimilar nature.

And in judging of all this, it is required alſo, *That a man ſhould uſe his Reaſon in the moſt free and diſintereſted manner; and let his Underſtanding conclude, what by the Laws and Conſtitution of Human Nature ought to be concluded from ſuch and ſuch circumſtances of things propoſed to it.*

This Point thus ſtated and ſettled, I ſhall now demonſtrate.

Secondly, *That the evidence we have for the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *does fully come up to theſe conditions.*

In order to this, let the following ſteps be well conſidered.

I have demonſtrated at large, in PART II. the validity and obligatory nature of *Moral Evidence*, together with the abſolute neceſſity we lie under of admitting ſuch kind of evidence as this; and that not from uncertain gueſſes and ſurmiſes, but from *what is plain Matter of Fact in Human Nature, and of experience in the World.*

I have

I have ſhewn, that, according to the *Nature of Things*, this ſort of proof is to be applied and made uſe of for evincing the truth of things in Caſes of the higheſt and greateſt Importance, all one as in thoſe that are of leſs moment, at PROP. IX. And therefore, that as there can be no ground nor pretence for requiring any other ſort of proof in this particular Caſe of the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo it is ſtrictly juſt and rational fully to acquieſce therein, provided it be ſuch as carries every thing along with it, that the Laws and Conſtitution of the World, and the circumſtances of Human Nature in it, have made neceſſary, in order to our full ſatisfaction and free aſſent in Caſes of this kind.

I have farther made it appear, that the Teſtimony for the fact of *Chriſt's Reſurrection* is ſo circumſtantiated, that if it may be rejected, no evidence of that nature is ever to be admitted amongſt mankind; but all *moral proof* muſt at once be thrown out of doors, and either *Senſible Proof, or Mathematical Demonſtration* be demanded and given for every thing that is propoſed as a matter of Belief.

That it was as impoſſible as any thing which is not *phyſically*, and ſimply impoſſible can be, that there ſhould have been any fraud committed by the Friends and Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*. And that by all the rules and meaſures known in the World for judging of events of this kind, if there had been any fraudulent management on the part of the Diſciples, it muſt infallibly have been diſcovered and laid open.

That all the plain and allowed marks of egregious Falſhood and Impoſture appeared thro' the whole behaviour and conduct of the enemies of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

That they did what guilty and ſelf-condemned men ought to have done, muſt neceſſarily do, and always actually do, in ſuch Caſes, to ſkreen malice and wickedneſs from diſcovery, and to run down truth that would expoſe them to the World.

Moreover,

Moreover, I have ſhewn, that the ſuppoſition of cheat and impoſture in the matter of *Chriſt's Reſurrection* is attended with the groſſeſt abſurdities, with ſuch plain and manifeſt contradictions, to all the known experience, the ſtated principles of action, and methods of procedure amongſt mankind; that a man that ſhould ſeriouſly advance or ſtand by any ſuch notions as thoſe, in any of the affairs and concerns of human life, would be given up as loſt to all common ſenſe and underſtanding, and thought incapable of any rational intercourſe with, or treatment from the reſt of his fellow-creatures.

And theſe conſequences are evidently not ſtrained or forced, but the native and genuine reſult of the Hypotheſis itſelf.

Laſtly, I have ſhewn likewiſe, that if there be any certain rules agreed to and received amongſt men, by which it may be known when an objection carries weight and force along with it, and when it does not; that then, by all thoſe rules, there is no weight nor force in any objection offered by the *Deiſts* againſt the doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*.

Now I ſay, *That all this laid together, amounts to an evidence of the conditions and qualifications before-mentioned.*

And I demonſtrate that it does do ſo, by making the application to each of thoſe conditions ſeverally and diſtinctly.

Firſt of all, I ſay, *That the arguments alledged to evince the truth of* Chriſt's Reſurrection, *do outweigh whatever objections are ſtarted on the contrary ſide:* And not only ſo, but I affirm likewiſe, *That there is no manner of proportion, and therefore no compariſon to be made, between the one and the other.*

For in thoſe arguments there is nothing ſuppoſed, but what was either *plain and notorious matter of fact*, and owned

owned and allowed to be such by all the enemies of *Christianity*; or what *constant and vulgar experience* justifies to be true; or what is perfectly agreeable to the most *impartial reason and unanimous sense of mankind.*

If there be any thing else supposed, which is either contrary, or not fairly reducible to one of these three heads; let these Gentlemen, upon examination, tell me where it lies. In the mean time the matter must rest there; and they may be sure I would not put it upon that issue, if I were not well assured that they could never demonstrate me to be in the wrong in this assertion, in any point of considerable consequence to the argument.

As for their *objections*, it is certain that they cannot possibly be founded on such principles as *matter of fact*, *experience*, *humane nature*, and *general consent*, if our arguments stand upon those foundations: And I hope it is not vain to say, that they are proposed in so perspicuous a manner, that any person of tolerable capacity may presently see whether they do stand upon those foundations or no.

And therefore the conclusion is unavoidable, *That the arguments do, beyond comparison outweigh the objections*; for reasonings that have no solid and allowed principles to support them, can bear no proportion to those which are supported by all that are solid and substantial.

And, indeed, if a man does but seriously consider what is to be objected on the *Deists* side, with respect to our Saviour's *Resurrection*; if he does but set what they say upon *the stealing away of the body*, *the natural impossibility of a* Resurrection, *and the want of publick, ocular demonstration*, in a clear light; he will easily see that all amounts to no more than mere harangue, or words adapted to the purposes of amusement and deception; since by all the laws of right reason and argument, there is nothing to be inferred from them. And so apprehensive am I of the intrinsick goodness and validity

of

of thoſe evidences which divine providence has given us for the ground and ſupport of our belief in this caſe; that I will venture to affirm this, not only of any objection that they ever have propoſed for the time paſt, but of any likewiſe that they ever ſhall for the time to come, invent, contrive, and ſtart againſt this doctrine. Nor is this at all more peremptory and bold, than what ought to be, or is conſiſtent with decency. And the reaſon is, becauſe I can fully aſſure my ſelf, *That GOD Almighty will never change the nature and the order of things*; ſo that that which is now intrinſically unjuſt and unreaſonable, ſhall ever come to be juſt and reaſonable; or, on the other hand, that arguments, which at one time do poſitively and directly conclude the truth of a thing, ſhould at another time become weak and ſophiſtical. And unleſs he does do thus, whatever ſhall at any time be objected againſt the truth of this fact, muſt neceſſarily be inſignificant and vain: becauſe, I ſay, he has furniſhed us with ſuch reaſons to conclude it, as can never poſſibly loſe their force, being founded on principles as ſtable as the world and humane nature it ſelf.

Secondly, It is evident likewiſe, *That the arguments alledged for the truth of this doctrine, are of ſuch a kind, as is ſuitable to the nature of the ſubject; and that therefore it would be infinitely irrational and fooliſh, to expect or demand any other ſort of proof than that for it.*

The caſe in diſpute is a *matter of fact*; that is, a point in its own nature not capable of *Mathematical* demonſtration, which therefore is not to be required for it.

And as for *ocular* demonſtration, or *ſenſible* proof; it is certain, indeed, that the truth of a matter of fact may be thus inconteſtably made out to thoſe who are *contemporaries* with it, and are on the ſpot where and when it was brought to paſs. But it is nonſenſe and con-

contradiction, for others who come after to talk of being convinced this way. And therefore *ſenſible* proof is to be excluded from all caſes of this kind, where the queſtion is concerning *one individual matter of fact*, no leſs than ſtrict *demonſtration* is from all matter of fact in general, and that upon the ſame ſcore too, *viz. Simple Impoſſibility*.

However, as it is notoriouſly evident, and I have expreſsly ſhewn at PROP. VIII. that we may be fully and indubitably aſſured of the truth of ſome matters of fact, whereof we are not ourſelves eye-witneſſes, *and that this is not only true in common experience and obſervation, but it is a principle likewiſe, upon which all the buſineſs, commerce, affairs, and publick management of mankind do abſolutely depend.*

So it is certain, that by the arguments we have to conclude the truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, a man may be made as ſure of it, as he can be of the truth of any thing elſe that he does not ſee with his own eyes.

Let a perſon tell me by what methods or upon what principles he aſſures himſelf of the truth of any thing that he has not *ocular* demonſtration for, whether in the way of *Hiſtory*, or *Civil Policy*, or *Trade* and *Dealing* in the world; and I will ſhew him, that upon the very ſame ſort of principles, but ſtrengthened with circumſtances of incomparably more force and advantage, he *may* believe, he *ought* to believe, and muſt be invincibly ſtubborn or ſtupid, if he does not believe, *That* Jeſus Chriſt *was really raiſed from the dead*. And this would be a ſhort way of bringing the diſpute to an iſſue, if theſe Gentlemen would but ſubmit to it: For there are but theſe three points to be examined.

Firſt, *Whether they have not a full and compleat aſſurance of the truth of ſome matters of fact, whereof they themſelves never were, nor could be eye-witneſſes?*

Secondly,

Secondly, *What Principles thoſe are upon which they reaſon themſelves into this aſſurance?*

Thirdly, *Whether, upon the very ſame Principles, we cannot, with equal juſtice, and much more ſtrength, aſſure ourſelves that it was Matter of Fact that* Jeſus Chriſt *roſe from the Dead?*

I would deſire no more than this. But ——

Thirdly, The Arguments offered to prove the reality of our Saviour's *Reſurrection* are ſuch, *that by the denial of them a man is forced upon conſequences that are palpably falſe, and moſt intolerably abſurd and ridiculous.*

He muſt ſuppoſe things, that not only never were done, but never can be done likewiſe, whilſt the conſtitution of the World and human nature remain unchanged. He muſt lay down ſuch Concluſions for true and certain, which every day's experience and acquaintance with mankind, will ſhew him to be manifeſtly falſe and impoſſible. To juſtify this, we need only review that train of conſequences that attend the grand Deiſtical Hypotheſis, *viz. That there was nothing but mere Juggle and Cheat in all the matter of Chriſt's Reſurrection*; and which I have already endeavoured to ſet in a clear light before the Reader in another place. I ſhall not repeat here what I have ſaid there or elſewhere; but only add this, That the conſequences I have drawn upon theſe Gentlemen, with reſpect to this matter, are ſo far from being any of them unfairly drawn, or deceitfully repreſented, that they will bear more and worſe aggravations ſtill than any I have loaded them withal: And that it is out of a decent regard to the grave and ſerious nature of the Subject, that I have forborn to lay open the Fanaticiſm and deſpicable Nonſenſe of *Deiſm* in ſuch a ſort of way as it deſerves.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, It is plain likewiſe, *That by the Principles which the* Chriſtians *go upon, they can ſolve whatever difficulties are propoſed to them in this matter; and that in the ſame eaſy and natural way which men always proceed in, to give themſelves a juſt ſatisfaction in all Caſes of the like kind.*

For this end, let the anſwers we have been obliged to return, up and down in ſeveral parts of this Treatiſe, to any doubts, or queries, or direct objections propoſed on the ſide of the *Deiſts*; let them, I ſay, be impartially weighed and examined by any perſon, who is fit to be a Judge in ſuch a Caſe; and let ſuch a one determine, whether what I aſſert on this Head be not true. Have we wrongfully concealed any part of their ſtrength, or made their objections appear fooliſh and ludicrous, on purpoſe to have an occaſion of expoſing them? Or rather, have we not given them all the ſcope and advantage in the way of propoſing them, that can fairly be deſired or expected from any Adverſary; and taken every opportunity to expreſs their ſenſe, in oppoſition to our own, where there was room for any thing of value and conſequence to be ſaid? Farther, Have we ever been obliged to make uſe of any little artifices to avoid the force of a concluſion on their part; or any indirect round-about methods in making a reply to what they propoſe; or any quibbling ambiguous Terms to blunder the Cauſe, and leave the Reader involved in doubts whether we ſpeak to the purpoſe, and fight with the *Deiſts* or with our own Shadows?

Have we been forced to advance any arbitrary precarious Hypotheſis; to lay down, or ſtand by any ſort of Poſition, which is alien from the common ſenſe and notions of mankind, which thwarts general uſage and practice, or ſubverts the eſtabliſhed Laws and Order of things.

Has

Has any thing of this kind been done, in order to evade or to get looſe from any objection of theirs, which we have had upon our hands?

If there has not, then this Article is clear: If there has, then it is incumbent on them to ſhew us where this ill management lies, and make it out that it is ſo.

In the *laſt* place, From all this, as well as from a review of the thing itſelf, I hope it is ſufficiently manifeſt, that our way of arguing has been all along diſintereſted and free; that we have not concluded from humour and prejudice, but from *Nature, and the neceſſity of things*; and that if thoſe Concluſions are in reality for us, and do ſerve our turn, and not that of the *Deiſts*; yet that it is not becauſe we will have it to be ſo, or do make thoſe Concluſions to run this way, againſt their own natural drift and tendency; but becauſe GOD Almighty, in the *Order and Conſtitution of things*, has made it ſtrictly rational, and therefore neceſſary for us to conclude after this manner: Nor can we do otherwiſe, without offering manifeſt violence to the Faculties he has endowed us with.

Thus we have *applied* the conditions and qualifications of the evidence deſcribed at SECT. III. PART II. to the ſeveral parts and ſteps of the evidence we have for the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; and upon the *Application*, we have found that they exactly agree to it: Or that the evidence we have for the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, does in all reſpects fully come up to thoſe Conditions.

From hence I infer——

Therefore there is ſuch an evidence for the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *as actually induces an obligation on all men, to whom that evidence is fairly propoſed, and who are capable of arguing upon it after a due and regular manner, to give their aſſent to it as a certain truth.*

But it is utterly impoſſible, that the ſupreme Governour of the World, whoſe juſt and wiſe Providence preſides over all things, and more eſpecially over the affairs and concerns of reaſonable Beings, *ſhould ever countenance an* Impoſture *with ſuch an Evidence, as ſhould lay an indiſpenſible obligation on rational Creatures to give their aſſent to it as real truth.*

Therefore this was not an Impoſture: *But it was certain and undoubted Matter of Fact*, that Jeſus Chriſt did riſe from the Dead. *Q. E. D.*

SECT. LXXII.

BEfore I come to draw the proper *Inferences* from this moſt important *Concluſion*, I would put theſe Gentlemen in mind of one thing; and that is, That I expect ſomething more than bare aſſertion and conjecture to be offered on their part, in order to the anſwering of this Argument. For as I have not proceeded upon any ſuch uncertain foundations with them; they are not to proceed upon any ſuch with me, in any defence they ſhall think fit to make.

In ſhort, to overturn my Argument, they muſt of neceſſity do one of theſe two things; and if it be ſo that they can do neither of them, then all their other efforts whatſoever muſt neceſſarily be vain.

Firſt, *They muſt either ſhew the Scheme I have gone upon to be wrong in itſelf, or inſufficient for my purpoſe: That the Principles I have made uſe of are foreign to the buſineſs, and will not in their own nature ſerve for that end and deſign which I have applied them to.*

Or, Secondly, *Allowing the Scheme to be juſt and right in itſelf, they muſt evince that I have been guilty of ſome fundamental miſtake in the management of it.*

I ſay,

I ſay, a *fundamental* miſtake: for it is not a bare ſlip or inadvertency, if they diſcover any thing of that kind in the performance, that will break the force of the argument as *to them*; no more than an unaccurate ſtep in the ſeries of a demonſtration, will ſpoil the concluſion, and make it of no effect. What they are to do, is to find out ſome error that is eſſential to the buſineſs; and ſuch as really makes the concluſion faulty and irregular; that is, influences it ſo far, that it is indeed no concluſion at all.

And this is what all men ought to make their aim and ſcope in all matters of diſpute, *viz. To look to the foundation-principles, and ſee whether they be right or no:* Becauſe this is the ſhorteſt and moſt direct way to bring the matter to a deciſion, and alſo ſhews a juſt regard to the great end of all controverſy, which is the diſcovery of truth, and that men do not diſpute for mere diſputing ſake.

Theſe are the only poſſible ways of attacking the argument; and they may make it either way, or, if they pleaſe, both ways.

To prove the *ſcheme itſelf* to be wrong or inſufficient, they muſt ſhew, that it was a wrong or an inſufficient way of going to work in this matter, to proceed after the following method, *viz.*

Firſt, To ſtate the nature of an evidence, which obliges human underſtanding to aſſent to a thing as true——

Then to evince, that an evidence, of ſuch conditions as thoſe deſcribed, is certainly obligatory——

Next, To ſhew that GOD Almighty can never ſuffer us to have ſuch evidence for an impoſture——

And laſtly, That there is actually ſuch an evidence for the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

This is the method I have uſed, and let them demonſtrate it is an ill one.

In order to ſhew my *Management* of this ſcheme to be fundamentally wrong, or to be faulty in ſome point of neceſſary moment to the concluſion, it will lie upon them to make out one of theſe four points——

Either, *Firſt*, That I have not rightly ſtated the nature and conditions of an evidence, which obliges the underſtanding of mankind to yield its aſſent.

Or, *Secondly*, That tho' thoſe conditions are rightly ſtated, yet I have come ſhort in my proof of the obligatory nature thereof, or have not gone the right way to work to ſhew that an evidence ſo qualified is obligatory.

Or, *Thirdly*, That notwithſtanding I have ſufficiently proved, that an evidence of thoſe conditions does infallibly oblige the underſtanding of mankind to yield its aſſent; yet, however, it is not inconſiſtent with the *Divine Perfections* to ſuffer Impoſtures to come recommended to us with ſuch an evidence.

Or, *Laſtly*, That tho' the evidence be truly ſtated, its obligatory nature proved, and it be impoſſible GOD ſhould ever ſuffer an Impoſture to come thus recommended to us; yet that there is a failure in the laſt Article, and that the evidence offered to prove the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt* does not come up to thoſe conditions.

If they attack the *firſt* Article, let them give us their notion of an obligatory evidence, fully and fairly ſtated; and at the ſame time, be ſure to make their account of it really different from what I have given.

If the *ſecond*, let them ſhew me the inſufficiency of the Principles I have proceeded upon, in order to demonſtrate the obligatory nature of the evidence deſcribed; as alſo, what other Principles I ought to have proceeded upon, inſtead of thoſe I have actually made uſe of.

If the *third*, let them give us an account of their *God Almighty*, that we may know what ſort of Being he muſt be, that can ſuffer notorious *Deluſions* and *Impoſtures*

poſtures to be preſented to the underſtandings of reaſonable creatures, with ſuch ſort of evidence for the truth of them.

If the *laſt*, let them effectually make out one or both of theſe articles —

Either, *Firſt*, That the matters of fact, on which the arguments for the *Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection* are grounded, are not true, but fictitious and imaginary.

Or, *Secondly*, That *my application and uſe of them is wrong*; and that the evidence ariſing from them does not in reality come up to the conditions and qualifications required in our ſcheme.

And here the way lies very plain and open before them: for I having ſummed up all thoſe conditions *ſeparately* and *diſtinctly*, it will be an eaſy matter to find out a groſs blunder, provided I have made any in the application.

Thus I have done all that I think can be fairly expected or required, in order to the ſettling this great point between *Us* and *Them*. I have propoſed the method of proof on our ſide, and I have ſhewn them all the poſſible ways of over-turning it; and it is not without a very clear proſpect of the utmoſt iſſue and reſult of all their attempts that I have done this.

In the mean time let us ſee *what follows from the doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *thus eſtabliſhed.*

General Corollary.

All thoſe conſequences which are drawn in the Firſt Part *of this diſcourſe relating to the* Divine Miſſion, Dignity, *and* Office *of* Chriſt Jeſus; *to the truth of the* Goſpel Revelation; *the* Happineſs *of* Sincere Chriſtians; *and the* dangers *to which* Unbelievers *are expoſed*; *and which were drawn upon ſuppoſition that the doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *was true: Theſe conſequences, I ſay, are now no longer* Suppoſitions, *but* Propoſitions, *or* Theorems *of infallible Truth.*

We can say now assuredly——

That Christ Jesus *was a Divine Person; the great Prophet, Messenger, and Son of GOD; the only Saviour and Mediator between GOD and Sinners; and authorized Legislator, and Revealer of the Divine Will and Purposes to the World; and who, by the Father's appointment and constitution, is the sovereign Judge of all.*

That his gospel is actually a revelation of the mind and pleasure of GOD, for the instruction and government of mankind, in order to their eternal salvation; and ought accordingly to be received and depended upon, as the great rule of faith and practice, wherever it is promulged.

That contempt of this revelation, is a direct contempt of GOD himself; and rebellion against the express orders of heaven, by which the authority of it is established.

That the case of wilful, obstinate unbelievers is infinitely hazardous; and of such as continue impenitent to the last, in spite of all the merciful calls of the gospel, and the provision made for their rational satisfaction and conviction, in order to their cure, for all that we can know of the matter, is forlorn and desperate: The threatnings of the Gospel being delivered in the most plain and peremptory terms, and GOD having given us no manner of ground to believe or hope for any relaxation of them, or that he has provided any other remedy than that which he has here revealed, *viz. By faith in* Christ Jesus, *and sincere obedience to his laws.*

That the *Deists*, therefore, must necessarily represent themselves as persons given up to humour and prejudice, and resolved not to think, nor examine things to the bottom, but pass their days here in the world in a *blind mechanical repose*, till they take this matter into deep and serious consideration; and, setting themselves to reason upon it, as men should and may do, come, by the help of GOD's grace (which will certainly assist sincerely

cerely induſtrious, humble and honeſt minds) to this good Concluſion, *viz. That they ought to believe and obey the Goſpel of* Jeſus Chriſt, *and that their happineſs in another life depends upon their ſo doing.*

And may they all come to make this Concluſion!

May they know *Chriſt Jeſus* as the Son of GOD, and as their Lord and Saviour: *Having their hearts warmed with his Love, and their mouths opened to ſhew forth his Praiſe!*

For every hard ſpeech, and unworthy thought of him, let them feel the deepeſt ſorrow and compunction of Soul; even that godly ſorrow *which works Repentance to Salvation never to be repented of!*

May the Blood of *Jeſus* be their atonement; and, thro' him let them offer up to GOD that Sacrifice of *a broken and contrite heart, which he will not deſpiſe!*

May the Goſpel be honoured by their Faith and Obedience; and the reſt of the unbelieving World led on to *Jeſus Chriſt* by their happy Example!

And when their Converſion has made Joy both in Heaven and on Earth, and they have taſted liberally the bleſſed Fruits of the Faith of the Goſpel in ſolid vertue, peace and comfort here, may they reach the perfection of all in the heavenly Kingdom; where *Jeſus Chriſt*, who *died and roſe again*, now ſits at the Right Hand of GOD, and has prepared entertainments for thoſe that love him, *ſuch as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what, and how great they are!*

And this is what all good *Chriſtians* will ſay *Amen* to.

SECT. LXXIII.

BUT there are ſome other inferences from this Doctrine of our Saviour's *Reſurrection*; which, relating to the *Chriſtians* only, I thought proper to ſubjoin here

by themſelves. Nor could I omit mentioning of them, without a very faulty neglect; ſince they make ſo much for the ſolid comfort of thoſe who ſincerely believe the Goſpel.

The uſes which ſuch may make of this great Article of the *Chriſtian Faith* are many, and very conſiderable.

From hence they may aſſure themſelves of *Pardon and Juſtification before GOD.*

For Chriſt *was delivered for our Offences, and raiſed again for our Juſtification.*

And, *Him hath GOD exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to* Iſrael, *and forgiveneſs of ſins,* Again——

This is a ſure and never-failing foundation, upon which they may ſafely bottom all their Faith and Hope.

He, ſays the Apoſtle *Peter*, ſpeaking of our Lord, *was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the World, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you, who by him do believe in GOD, that raiſed him from the Dead, and gave him Glory, that your Faith and Hope might be in GOD.*

And the ſame Apoſtle tells us, in another part of his divine Epiſtle, that *we are begotten again to a lively Hope, by the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for us.*

Our Lord's *Reſurrection* is likewiſe ſet forth in holy Writ, as the pattern or example of our deliverance from the power of ſin, and leading a new and holy life.

Therefore, ſays the Apoſtle *Paul, are we buried with him by Baptiſm into Death; that like as* Chriſt *was raiſed up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.* And again,

Knowing that Chriſt *being raiſed from the Dead, dieth no more; Death hath no more dominion over him.* ——*Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto GOD, thro'* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.*

And

And from hence the practice of holineſs and mortification is immediately preſſed and enforced. — *Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof; neither yield ye your members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin: But yield yourſelves unto GOD, as thoſe that are alive from the Dead; and your members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto GOD.*

And the Apoſtle makes uſe of the ſame ſort of Argument to perſuade *Chriſtians* not only to a righteous and holy, but a more generous, pure, and exalted *Converſation*; to a temper that ſhould raiſe them beyond this ſphere of earthly things, and diſpoſe them to ſeek all their pleaſures and felicities above. —*If ye be then riſen with* Chriſt, *ſeek thoſe things which are above, where* Chriſt *ſitteth at the right hand of GOD: Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with* Chriſt *in GOD.*

So that we ſee all the *Graces*, the *Enjoyments*, the *Duties* and *Offices* of the *Chriſtian Life* are derived from hence, I mean the *Reſurrection* of our bleſſed Saviour, as their native and genuine ſpring.

SECT. LXXIV.

BUT there is yet another uſe to be made of this Doctrine; which, tho' it relates to the body, the vileſt and moſt ignoble part of us, is not for that reaſon to be deſpiſed; but, on the other hand, highly to be prized and valued by every true *Chriſtian:* And that is this, *viz. That the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *is a certain and undoubted pledge to all ſincere Believers of their own* Reſurrection *to a glorious Immortality.*

For now is Chriſt *riſen from the Dead, and become the Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept.* Which expreſſion of the *Firſt-fruits*, intimates a particular connection between the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, and that of thoſe who believe on him: It repreſents both the one and the other, but as parts of the ſame great deſign, or the beginning and end

end of the ſame work: The *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt* being the firſt leading ſtep towards that univerſal triumph over Death and the Grave, which our *Reſurrection* will, in due time, render perfect and compleat.

For as in Adam *all die, even ſo in* Chriſt *ſhall all be made alive; but every man in his own order:* Chriſt, *the Firſt-Fruits, afterward they that are* Chriſt's *at his coming.*

And the Apoſtle is ſo very clear and expreſs in arguing the certainty of our *Reſurrection* from that of our Saviour's; that he puts it upon us, if we believe the one, to depend upon the other as certain alſo. *For if we believe,* ſays he, *that* Jeſus *died, and roſe again; even ſo them alſo which ſleep in* Jeſus, *will GOD bring with him.* Nay, he does not only *directly* infer one from the other, but he argues, *per impoſſibile*, the nullity of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, and the falſity of the whole Goſpel-Revelation, from the *Hypotheſis* of our not being raiſed; and conſequently leaves that *Hypotheſis* expoſed, as an infinitely falſe and abſurd one. *For if the Dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt raiſed. And if* Chriſt *be not raiſed, your Faith is vain, you are yet in your Sins: Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in* Chriſt, *are periſhed: Yea, and we are found falſe witneſſes of GOD; becauſe we have teſtified of GOD, that he raiſed up* Chriſt; *whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the Dead riſe not.*

It is obſervable, that the Apoſtle repeats this Argument, *per impoſſibile*, three or four times in that Chapter; and to be ſure it was not by chance, nor to no purpoſe that he does do ſo.

It might have been thought a ſufficient ſecurity to us, to have been aſſured, that becauſe *Chriſt* was riſen, we ſhould riſe alſo, in our proper order and ſeaſon. But it is much more ſtill, to have the point carried thus, *viz. That* Chriſt *himſelf is not riſen, nor his Goſpel true, if it be ſo that we riſe not from the Dead.* This does not make it only a fair conſequence that we ſhall riſe again, but a plain impoſſibility that we ſhould not.

All

All the arguments that ſerve to prove the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* and the truth of the Goſpel-Revelation, and which we know to be of infallible truth and certainty, are thus by conſequence made arguments to infer the certainty of our *Reſurrection*.

So that this privilege is eſtabliſhed on ſo ſure a foot to all that believe the goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that it can never become doubtful to them till they come to queſtion all the principles and foundations of their faith.

SECT. LXXV.

NOW this doctrine of a *future Reſurrection* is of the greateſt uſe and ſervice to us upon many important accounts.

For from hence we may derive——

Firſt, *The beſt ſupports under the proſpect and apprehenſions of death.*

Secondly, *The beſt reaſons to endure all the calamities of life with patience and fortitude.*

And, Thirdly, *The moſt powerful motives to diligence and perſeverance in all the duties enjoined by our holy religion.*

For the *Firſt*, What tho' after a few days more we leave the light of this world, and go down into the gloomy manſions of death! What tho' we ceaſe from action and buſineſs here, are laid out of ſight and remembrance, and our bodies turn to duſt and rottenneſs.

This is, indeed, a melancholy ſcene to fleſh and blood; and it is the more affecting too, becauſe we know it is what we cannot poſſibly avoid, and a few turns more in the world will bring us to it.

However, a *Chriſtian* may view even this dark and diſmal ſcene with comfort.

For tho' Soul and Body muſt part, yet *the ſeparation is but for a ſeaſon*; and that in order to a more happy union, ſuch as ſhall never be diſſolved.

The

The grave is not to be our everlaſting priſon: And the time will come, when *death itſelf ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory.*

And what can have more influence to alleviate thoſe agonies, which the proſpect of an approaching diſſolution may throw weak fleſh and blood into, than to conſider that this is but a ſtep to eternal life and liberty? That this gate once paſſed, we are for ever out of the reach of all danger and trouble; and entred upon a ſtate, where death ſhall have no power, nor the terrors of the grave ever fright us any more.

On the other hand, How ſad and painful a thing muſt it be, to die without theſe hopes! I mean, to die in a ſtate of abſolute Infidelity: For a true *Chriſtian* may go off (and many do, no doubt) without the comfort of thoſe hopes, which their own ſincere faith in *Chriſt Jeſus* might entitle them to. But what I ſay, is, that it muſt needs be doleful for a man to die with ſceptical fears and doubts about futurity, and the conſequences of the ſeparation of ſoul and body: When he does not know what he ſhall be next, or where he ſhall go, or how he ſhall be diſpoſed of; whether *annihilated* or *metamorphoſed*, or condemned to wander in eternal night, a dark unknown ſomewhere, worried with reſtleſs thoughts, and without proſpect of releaſe. And therefore, that thoſe perſons who believe and obey the Goſpel of *Chriſt Jeſus* are infinitely happy, in that they have ſo ſure a bottom and foundation for chearful hope at their going out of this world, by the many repeated aſſurances of a future joyful re-union of ſoul and body, and a glorious immortality conſequent thereupon.

SECT. LXXVI.

Secondly, AS *to all the miſeries and calamities of human life*; this doctrine ſerves mightily to

to encourage us, and to fortify our patience and reſolution in the enduring of them.

We find by experience, that in all ſorts of trouble and diſtreſs, nothing is ſo grateful and refreſhing to us as a proſpect of After-eaſe and Deliverance. When a man looks round him, and ſees nothing but calamity on every ſide, and no appearance of help or comfortable retreat; no likelihood of the end of his troubles, or that things will be better with him in time to come: This tends either quite to damp the force and vigour of the ſpirits, or to introduce phrenſy and wild deſpair. And either way it renders a man wholly uncapable of a juſt and regular management of himſelf under his affliction.

But to have hope in miſery, and much more a proſpect of certain eſcape from all in due time; how does this ſtrengthen and invigorate every power, and excite us to do all that is poſſible to throw off the burden from us, or to keep ourſelves from ſinking under it?

And if ſo, What comfort then may true *Chriſtians* draw from the believing foreſight of a bleſſed Reſurrection, and all the joyful conſequences of it?

Alas! our greateſt worldly deliverances are but from ſome particular troubles and misfortunes; which, as ſoon as removed, may return again, or be ſucceeded by others as bad or worſe. And if it be not ſo, yet all the joy and pleaſure reſulting from ſuch deliverances are but for a little time: They are gone with the fleeting vapour of Life, almoſt as ſoon as we begin to perceive and reliſh them.

But here we have *univerſal* freedom and felicity before us! A perfect exemption from all evil, ſweetened by *Eternity*, and joined with *poſitive* Happineſs, which a *Reſurrection* will let us into, fit to be deſcribed only in that Heaven where it ſhall be enjoyed!

Now, I ſay, here is a ſcene of things ſo tranſcendently glorious and beautifully preſented to our view, that

that were our *faith* but ſuch as it ought to be, no melancholy or deſpondency whatſoever would be able to interrupt our peace and quiet.

SECT. LXXVII.

BUT it may be worth while to deſcend to particular inſtances, *And ſhew the uſe of this doctrine, as it ſerves for our ſupport and comfort under the moſt ordinary trials of human life.*

Firſt therefore, *Suppoſe we are oppreſſed with bodily pains and diſeaſes, which deprive us of the pleaſure and contentment of life:* It is no ſmall relief, in ſuch a caſe as this, to think that the *very principles of all theſe diſorders* ſhall be left behind us in the grave.

That hereafter we ſhall put off *mortality and corruption*, and exchange a drooping frail conſtitution for *immortal ſtrength and vigour*. At preſent it is a vaſt deal of art and attendance that is requiſite to keep thoſe *tender machines*, we carry about with us, in any tolerable good order. How many methods do we uſe to compoſe and ſettle them, under the painful ſenſations they are here liable to? What recruits are we obliged to lay in for their daily expences and decays? And when a diſorder happens, what troubleſome applications, what coſtly experiments are made before it is removed, and the labouring ſprings of nature are reſtored to free action again? And after all, how often is the beſt art in the world nonpluſſed and baffled; and miſerable we, with all helps and remedies about us, are left groaning under our burdens?

But, notwithſtanding, there is a never-failing cure in view, which will at once carry off all theſe maladies, and prevent their return for ever. At death we may bid farewel to all infirmities: *For our outward man, tho' ſown in weakneſs, ſhall be raiſed in power; tho' ſown in diſhonour,*

diſhonour, it ſhall be raiſed in glory. Bodies will hereafter be prepared for us, moſt exquiſitely wrought and tempered, by the moſt wiſe and powerful hand of GOD, compoſed on purpoſe for the noble ſervice, and fit to ſhare the joys of a ſtate of Immortality; free from all the impurities and baſer mixtures of this terreſtial compoſition, and tempered into a fineneſs for the heavenly World, where nothing groſs and corruptible can dwell. And with what eaſe and pleaſure ſhall we then feel ourſelves, when, beſides the compleat cure wrought upon our ſouls, our bodies ſhall be ſo admirably diſpoſed too? When all the reproachful marks which ſin hath imprinted on them being utterly effaced, they ſhall be formed into a reſemblance to the glorious Body of our Lord? *Who will change our vile Bodies that they may be faſhioned like to his own glorious Body, by the working whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* And therefore let us look upon them under all their preſent diſorders, *with a patience and conſtancy becoming the expectation of ſo bleſſed a change.* And when they clog and diſcompoſe our minds, and hinder us from a free and chearful diſcharge of our duty, let it be a relief to us to think of the joys of a *Reſurrection-Day*, which are ſecured to us by the promiſe of our bleſſed Saviour.

SECT LXXVIII.

Secondly, *Suppoſe we meet with diſaſters and troubles abroad in the World, whether loſſes and diſappointments, or unjuſt violence and oppreſſion, or calumny and reproach:* Of all which the World generally affords no little plenty, to thoſe who will approve themſelves the ſincere Diſciples of the holy and bleſſed *Jeſus.*

We ought to conſider with ourſelves, in ſuch Caſes as theſe, *That this troubleſome condition of the World without*

out us, is ſuitable enough to the preſent unſettled and divided ſtate that we ourſelves are in here below.

Our bodies are in poor and miſerable circumſtances; quickly diſcompoſed and put out of tune; full of the ſeeds of diſtempers, and wearing every day towards a diſſolution.

The peace of our minds is frequently diſturbed by irregular paſſions and affections, by the dulneſs and heavineſs of the diſtempered Machine, by cloudy vapours, and a thouſand other malignant influences of the corporeal part, with which the Mind itſelf is affected by virtue of the laws of the *Union*. It is ſeldom that we have a ſerene and truly pleaſant enjoyment of ourſelves that laſts long; ſome care or labour, ſome anxiety or diſquietude in the circle of life, breaking in upon us to interrupt it.

We ſeldom keep to a pitch, either in our temper, our apprehenſions, or reliſh of things. And whether things about us change or no, we can be fooliſhly happy and miſerable by mere conceit and imagination. We often betray ourſelves into the greateſt dangers by our folly and imprudence, or raſhneſs and obſtinacy: So that the worſt enemies we have cannot do us that miſchief, which ſad and common experience aſſures us it is in our power to do ourſelves.

Now, I ſay, it is no great matter whether all things go on ſmoothly and eaſily abroad, ſince affairs are in ſo ill a poſture at home: For our own vitiated conſtitution would be always a fountain of trouble and uneaſineſs to us. If we could make the World go juſt as we would have it; yet, unleſs a perfect cure were likewiſe wrought upon ourſelves, all the pleaſure ariſing from thence would be ſadly imbittered to us. Beſides, ſuch a ſtate of perfect quiet and freedom from all external trouble might be of very dangerous conſequence to us with reſpect to the next World, how much ſoever it might pleaſe and gratify us in this. For we find that very

very great croſſes and afflictions are ſometimes hardly ſufficient to keep men in the way of their duty; and that they can make hard ſhifts to tread forbidden ground, tho' every ſtep be amongſt thorns. What would it then be, if there were nothing to give a check to ſin and extravagance, or to put us in mind of our duty and danger? What would it be, if the world did nothing but ſmile and tempt, and our way was all pleaſure and ſoftneſs? So that all theſe things well conſidered, we may eaſily convince ourſelves, *That there is no need of a ſtate of more reſt and quiet than this is for us, ſuch as we now are, to enjoy ourſelves that little time we have to ſtay here.*

But then on the other hand, *So glorious a change as will one day be wrought in us, is a full aſſurance, even to our reaſon, of a proportional change of all circumſtances without us.* GOD, who will hereafter join pure and ſpotleſs minds to exactly tempered and harmonized bodies, will make us enjoy the comforts of ſo advantageous a union in a life of perfect pleaſure and tranquillity.

It is a ſurprizing work to raiſe human nature from its preſent mean and frail condition to a ſtate of glorious and perfect health. And therefore GOD, who will do that work, will undoubtedly ſuit all things ſo, that all the ends and purpoſes of it ſhall be obtained. He will not make us capable of perfect felicity, without beſtowing perfect felicity upon us. And this is certain, *That no joys within can make a happineſs perfect, which is liable to aſſault and diſturbance from without.* And therefore, in that world, to which a *Reſurrection* will introduce us, *there will be no enemies to oppreſs, nor no diſaſterous events to make us uneaſy, and take off from our enjoyments.* Theſe are the proper trials of this world, where ſin and corruption live, which neceſſarily produce trouble and ſorrow, and render them alſo very uſeful to us. But when our natures are refined from all that baſe allay, and the work of GOD is compleated both

in ſoul and body, there will be no room for any diſcipline or exerciſe of this ſort. Trouble and Confuſion would be more diſagreeable to ſuch a ſtate, than perfect Reſt and Liberty to this.

Now it is a motive to invincible courage and reſolution, in bearing all the evils we meet with in this world to conſider there is ſuch a ſtate before us, in which we ſhall be out of the reach of all, and enjoy an everlaſting undiſturbed repoſe: That in a few days more, when death ſhall come to give us a diſcharge from hence, we may ſay of all things troubleſome and afflictive here, as the *Iſraelites* of their enemies at the brink of the *Red-ſea*, *we ſhall ſee them no more for ever.*

SECT. LXXIX.

THirdly and laſtly, *This doctrine is the moſt effectual encouragement to the exerciſe of all grace and vertue, and the diſcharge of every duty incumbent on us, in our* Chriſtian *Courſe.*

It is a ſufficient proof of the truth of this propoſition, *That the doctrine of the* Reſurrection *is made uſe of for this purpoſe by the holy Apoſtle St.* Paul, *who knew perfectly well from what Topicks* duty *and* diligence *ought to be preſſed upon us.* For after he has inferred our certain victory over death, by ſteps of clear and undeniable evidence; and repreſented the triumphs of that glorious day, in which we ſhall put on *Immortality* and *Incorruption*; he gives a moſt pathetick exhortation to zeal and conſtancy in GOD's ſervice, and plainly enforces it from that very conſideration of the *Reſurrection*, and the bleſſed conſequences of it. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch as ye know that your labour in the Lord ſhall not be in vain.*

I think it is evident, beyond all poſſibility of juſt and rational queſtion, that the Apoſtle does here make uſe of

of the doctrine of a future *Reſurrection*, as an argument to godly diligence and perſeverance in the duties of a *Chriſtian* life. And, indeed, in the nature of the thing itſelf, the promiſe and proſpect of a glorious reward hereafter is a moſt powerful incitement to piety and obedience: So far, that without the former, I cannot ſee but we ſhould want our main and greateſt encouragement, as rational creatures, to the latter. I hope I ſhall not be miſunderſtood. I ſpeak here of the pure abſtracted duties of *Chriſtianity*, as diſtinct from all thoſe of the *natural Law*. For I have expreſsly ſhewn already, PART I. SECT. X. that our obligations to all the duties of morality and natural religion would continue fixed and unſhaken, if all views of future happineſs and immortality were taken away from us. And the grounds upon which I have proceeded to eſtabliſh that doctrine, I am very ſecure, are ſuch as can never be queſtionable to any but thoſe perſons only who believe that God Almighty, in making man, made a creature under no moral relations nor obligations to himſelf, but left at full liberty to range and rove up and down the world, in which he placed him, as wild and thoughtleſs as the very brutes themſelves.

But as to the rules and duties of the *Chriſtian Religion*, as ſuch, I think it is a very clear caſe, *That our main encouragement to the practice of them were utterly loſt, if we had no proſpect of future rewards.*

And the reaſon is, becauſe, as we have ſhewn PART I. SECT. IX, XII, XIII, XIV, XV. theſe duties are plainly calculated for a future ſtate; the very ſcope and drift of them is to prepare us for ſuch a happineſs as the Goſpel reveals: That is, this is the ultimate, the grand ſcope and deſign of the *Chriſtian Inſtitution*; how improving ſoever it may be to human nature, or beneficial to ſociety in other reſpects. And, indeed, if we do but compare the deſcription given in the *New Teſtament* of the heavenly ſtate, with that ſort of life and temper

which the rules and precepts of the goſpel tend to bring men unto in this world, we ſhall eaſily be convinced of the truth of this. We ſhall find, that heaven is but the perfection of our *Chriſtanity*, tho' ſuch a perfection as we cannot now comprehend.

Purity, Tranquillity and Love, chearful ſervice of GOD, and delightful Zeal in doing his Will, are the beauties of the preſent *Chriſtian* life, as well as of that glorious one which is to come. Theſe are the eſſentials of both ſtates, how much ſoever they differ in circumſtances and degrees.

Here, indeed, our devotion is mixed with infirmity, and our enjoyments allayed by many neceſſary trials of *Chriſtian* vertue, which the world above knows nothing of: However, when we live and act as *Chriſtians* ſhould do, it is plain, by all the accounts we have in the goſpel, that we then begin that ſort of life, which, when freed from all mixtures of ſin and ſorrow, will conſtitute the Heaven we look for.

SECT. LXXX.

AND therefore now I ſay, *If a future bleſſed life be the perfection of our* Chriſtian *graces; if the tendency of all theſe duties be thitherwards, and the practice of them be ſo direct and proper a means to prepare us for that felicity, and ſo peculiarly adapted to that deſign, as it evidently is:*

Then if that main and great end be taken away; of what value are the means, whoſe direction is to, and whoſe center is in that end? And what motives or encouragements have we to put us on to apply ourſelves to the uſe of them? That very ſuppoſition which takes away the end itſelf, takes away all their fitneſs and uſefulneſs to us, and therefore conſequently all our ſprings of deſire and endeavour, to put them into practice. Whereas

Whereas do but lay down a ſtate of future rewards as ſure and certain, and then we have, both as men and Chriſtians, the higheſt encouragements imaginable to a conſtant, careful, and zealous diſcharge of all the moſt ſublime and abſtracted duties which the goſpel enjoins us.

SECT. LXXXI.

I Am afraid *this doctrine will ſeem too legal and mercenary to ſome good* Chriſtians, *who cannot digeſt diſcourſes of this kind ſo eaſily as they may ſome others contained in this Treatiſe.*

They will be apt to think here is more regard had to *our own felicity and advantage*, and leſs to the *Glory of GOD*, than what the noble and generous ſpirit of the Goſpel allows of. For, I confeſs, I have intimated very plainly and freely, *That I firmly believe we ought to have an eye to the reward in all our* Chriſtian *duty and ſervice, and are not obliged to proceed upon any ſublime abſtracted views of the Glory of GOD, without the conſideration of our own felicity:* And therefore, *That we ſhould loſe our main encouragements to the practice of the duties of* Chriſtianity, *if the hopes of a future reward were taken away.*

And I muſt needs ſay, that as long as I conſider *human nature* and *divine Revelation* in a juſt regard to each other, I have no proſpect of ever coming to any other ſcheme of thoughts. It ſeems to me to be ſo unavoidable and neceſſary, from the joint conſideration of theſe two, that I cannot forbear thinking, thoſe that are in the contrary opinion do forget either the one or the other, in the concluſions they draw towards the maintaining of their own ſcheme.

And if after all, they will ſtill go on to decry ſuch a practice as this as baſe, mercenary, and un-evangelical, they muſt do ſo; for there is no remedy againſt a licentious humour of calling things by wrong names,

or of branding them with infamous ones, when they do not pleaſe people, or are not agreeable to a ſet of notions they have entertained.

I ſhall not be guilty of painting out the opinion I oppoſe in any hateful and invidious colours; but leaving the patrons of it to their liberty of expoſing all parties who differ from them, *as people under the bondage and ſervile ſpirit of the law, and wholly unacquainted with the eaſe and freedom of a Goſpel ſtate*, I ſhall offer them ſome good reaſons why they ought to do otherwiſe, and leave the reſult of all to themſelves.

And *firſt* of all, As for *Scripture-Authority*, for I am now ſpeaking to ſuch whoſe principles make it no begging of the queſtion to make uſe of this argument, I ſhall confine my ſelf to that paſſage of the Apoſtle St. *Paul* before-mentioned: For what plenty ſoever there be of very plain and poſitive texts to this purpoſe in the *New Teſtament* beſides; yet I ſhall keep to this one, as being ſufficient, and that which relates the moſt immediately to my preſent buſineſs and deſign.

Wherefore, (or ὥστε, ſo that) *my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know* (or knowing, εἰδότες) *that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

If theſe words were not dropt by chance, and ſure we cannot think the pen of an Apoſtle to be ſo impertinently luxuriant, then there is ſome argument and deſign in them.

And if there be ſo, then the queſtion is, What the Apoſtle's ſcope and deſign in theſe words is? Or to what end and purpoſe it is that he uſes them here? It is a plain caſe, that here is a duty, and a very important one too, recommended, *viz. Diligence and perſeverance in the works of Piety and Religion.* And every man that is not wilfully blind may ſee that there is a motive, or an inducement made uſe of, to ſtir *Chriſtians* up to the performance of this duty.

And

And this motive is evidently *the proſpect of a future reward*; which is as eaſy to be ſeen, as the very words of the text themſelves.

For to be aſſured that our *labour ſhall not be in vain*, is to be aſſured *that it ſhall be rewarded*. And to be urged to duty from this conſideration, that our *labour ſhall not be in vain*, is to be urged to duty from the *proſpect of a future reward*, and to be encouraged to abound in GOD's ſervice for that very reaſon, and from that principle.

And therefore, for the Apoſtle to expreſs himſelf after ſuch a manner as he does in this place, is manifeſtly to preſs duty from this conſideration, *that our labour ſhall be rewarded*; and thereby to authorize and warrant the practice of *Chriſtians* in having an eye thereto, not only as lawful, but alſo as truly ſpiritual and evangelical too. Nor do I believe it poſſible for any perſon fairly to avoid this concluſion, without falling foul upon grammar and good ſenſe, and loſing the reſpect owing to a divinely inſpired writer.

SECT. LXXXII.

Secondly, *BY all the diſcoveries we have of the infinitely merciful and gracious nature of GOD, we are ſure that he has joined his own glory and our good together; and thereby made it a poſitive duty incumbent on us, to direct our aims to the one as well as the other.*

All his inſtitutions are calculated and contrived for the promoting of our felicity. He does not command duty out of pure ſovereignty, or merely for duty's-ſake; but to train us up by a courſe of holy ſervice and obedience for the fruitions and employments of a happy life hereafter, that we may ſhew forth the praiſes of his divine adorable perfections with thoſe exalted powers and capacities we ſhall then be endowed with. And this GOD,

out of his gracious condeſcenſion, is pleaſed to look upon as our *glorifying of him*, and does accordingly ſet it forth to us in ſcripture as ſuch; nor is it poſſible in the nature of the thing, that we, or all created nature beſides, can glorify GOD any other way, or in any other ſenſe than this.

And therefore, rightly to aim at their own felicity in the uſe of thoſe means which he has appointed us, is to aim at his glory, ſince that is the great end of all our happineſs; and every joy and perfection we arrive at in heaven, ſpeaks the praiſes of him who brought us thither.

It is ſcarce to be believed, that any perſon that has a notion of the Goſpel, ſhould have ſuch groſs conceptions of Heaven, as to look on it only as a place of eaſe and pleaſure to himſelf; without any views of praiſe and glory to that GOD, from whoſe immenſe and unmerited goodneſs all his happineſs flows. This would be to make worſe than a *Mahometan* paradiſe of the *Chriſtian* Heaven, and to think of happineſs in ſo ſottiſh and ſtupid a manner, and ſo little agreeable to the nature of man, which is ſenſible and tender, and ſpreads into love and gratitude for benefits received; that, I ſay, it is not to be imagined that any perſon who knows any thing of *Chriſtianity*, can ever frame ſuch a ſlaviſh, irregular notion of the happineſs it promiſes. So that when ſuch perſons talk at any time of *eyeing the reward*, it is ſcarce humanity; but for certain it is far from *Chriſtian* charity, to ſuppoſe them to abſtract intirely from the conſideration of GOD's glory, and to intend nothing but their own advantage and felicity in what they do. On the other hand, all that underſtand the goſpel in its genuine ſimplicity, without the forced interpretations and deceitful gloſſes, which men put upon it to bring it to ſpeak the ſenſe of their own ſchemes and ſyſtems, do conſtantly profeſs to believe, that the Glory of GOD is the *ultimate* end of all their godly endeavours, attainments,

ments, and enjoyments, whether on earth and in heaven; but that their own happineſs and benefit is likewiſe an end, tho' a *ſubordinate* one, which they are to have a regard to: And that as GOD has inſeparably connected theſe two with each other, ſo they ſerve and pleaſe him, by purſuing them both in conjunction; and cannot more effectually aim and deſign to glorify GOD, than by aiming and deſigning to obtain his Grace, and prepare themſelves for future happineſs, in and by the uſe of thoſe means which he has appointed, and expreſsly commanded them to uſe for that end.

SECT. LXXXIII.

BUT, Thirdly, *Thoſe Perſons who call it baſe and mercenary to act from the hopes of a future Reward, ſeem to me quite to forget the Temper and Conſtitution of Human Nature, and to ſet the Goſpel and that at Variance with each other.*

For GOD, as the Author of nature, has undoubtedly implanted that affection of *Hope* in our breaſts, to ſerve us for very excellent ends and purpoſes.

It is this which puts life and ſweetneſs into every thing, and is the great ſpring of all action and endeavour. If any valuable Good be ſet before us, which we are put into a fair way of attaining, and our Minds are touched with a lively Senſe of the excellency and agreeableneſs of it to us, *this Principle* is naturally rouzed and ſet a-work, and influences all the Powers of our inward and outward Man into proper and ſuitable motions: And to ſay, that in ſuch a caſe as this we do not eye and reſpect that Good, and are not prompted to do our utmoſt, and encounter all difficulties that lie in the way, from the hopes we have of obtaining it, is to give the lye to our own conſtitution, which plainly tells us that we do do ſo. We are all conſcious to ourſelves, *That our warmth*

Warmth and Inclination to vigorous Action does in all Caſes riſe and fall, in proportion to our juſt and rational Hopes: And on the other hand, that nothing ſo effectually chills all our Faculties, and induces a remiſs and careleſs Diſpoſition of Mind, which ends in a total neglect of the Uſe of Means, as the Loſs of Hope does. And if this be our Conſtitution *as Men*, I am ſure it is not overturn'd or alter'd by *Chriſtianity*. The Grace of GOD, which makes us new Creatures, does not do it in this Senſe, to diveſt us of the Paſſions and Inclinations of human Nature. But whatever happy change be wrought upon us in correcting the Vices and Diſtempers of our Faculties, they themſelves are preſerv'd entire in their ſeveral Natures and Tendencies to their proper Objects. The ſame Springs of Motion and Action continue in us as before, and muſt therefore work as before, only after a more regular manner, and to more noble Ends and Purpoſes.

And therefore, when our Minds are duly enlighten'd and convinc'd by the ſalutary Operations of the Divine Spirit, ſo that we ſee the ſuperlative Excellency of the heavenly Rewards, propoſed to us in the Goſpel to be obtained in the way of a *patient Continuance in good Works:* To ſay, that the Hope of this ſhould not influence us to Zeal and Perſeverance in the diſcharge of our Duty; is to ſay, that we ſhould throw off human Nature, and own ourſelves to be Creatures of a different Species from what we were before our Converſion. For as long as we continue to be Men, and are in the way towards the Enjoyment of any Good, which we have juſt and pleaſing Apprehenſions of, becauſe we hope, and hope reaſonably, therefore we are inſpir'd with Reſolutions to uſe all neceſſary Means to come at the Poſſeſſion of it. And this is the certain and neceſſary Reſult of that innate Deſire after our own Good and Felicity, which we can no more diveſt ourſelves of, than we can divide ourſelves from ourſelves, or put off our very Eſſence. Let any

any Man conſult his own Conſtitution, and ſee if he does not find it ſo.

From hence, therefore, we may argue: If it be thus with reſpect to all the inferior Good this World affords us, can it be otherwiſe *when the higheſt Good our Natures are capable of, is ſet before us?* Can the Hope of ſome trifling Enjoyment here engage all our Diligence and Care? And when the Object comes to be as great as Heaven, and charming as the Pleaſures of an immortal Life, and theſe duly repreſented and believed by us; can our Hope then only be a languid, feeble Affection, and not able to do what it does in other Caſes? By what Laws ſhould human nature exert itſelf ſo vigorouſly in one Caſe upon poor and deſpicable Motives, and forbear to do ſo in another, when the Motives to Action are heightned beyond all poſſible Compariſon? This is to make it below even a piece of Clockwork, which will mend its Pace with a bigger Weight.

SECT. LXXXIV.

FROM hence, therefore, I conclude, *That that Religion which is cried up for ſo much Purity and Spirituality, upon Pretence of abſtracting from all Encouragements to Duty, given by a Promiſe of future Rewards; is not only contrary to the Goſpel, which does both enjoin and commend it, but alſo to the very Conſtitution and moſt eſſential Laws of Human Nature.*

That it is abſolutely impracticable, whilſt we continue Men; and before it can obtain amongſt us, we muſt be taken to pieces, and ſet together after a different manner from what we now are. And therefore, that thoſe Perſons, who pretend to act in this manner, do, by ſome Inadvertencies to the Bent of Human Nature in themſelves, or by ſome falſe arguings, impoſe upon their own weakneſs, and by degrees manage themſelves into a Perſuaſion,

ſuaſion, *That they perform Duty without reſpect to a Reward, when indeed there is no ſuch matter.* And how far a Set of wrong Notions, or inveterate Prejudices, or ill management of Reaſon and Religion both, may contribute to peoples forming a wrong notion, even of what they do themſelves, common Experience will ſhew thoſe who converſe much with mankind.

SECT. LXXXV.

BUT Fourthly and Laſtly, *This Doctrine is, beſides, attended with dangerous Conſequences.*

For to cry up that for pure evangelical piety, in which men take no encouragement to duty from the hope of the reward which the Goſpel promiſes; and to run down all the reſt as the effect of a legal, mercenary, and ſlaviſh temper: This has a plain tendency to introduce a neglect and diſregard of duty, or at leaſt to abate our zeal and reſolution in the performance. And tho' I do not charge all the ill Conſequences that follow from theſe notions upon thoſe who entertain them; yet I ſay, ſeveral very bad ones do follow fairly from them, nor is there any thing but what is ſufficiently plain, neceſſary to the proof of it. For in that weak and degenerate ſtate into which mankind is fallen, there is need of all the Motives that can be to confirm us in our love of GOD and Goodneſs. And he, therefore, who made us, and knows both our natural and contracted infirmities, has mercifully enjoined his own Glory and our Felicity together; made religion our intereſt, as well as our duty; and order'd it ſo, that in the way of anſwering the great ends of our creation, which are to ſet forth his Praiſes, we ſhould alſo ſecure an everlaſting happineſs ourſelves. And ſince he has joined both theſe together, it is certain that *infinite Wiſdom* ſaw juſt Reaſons for ſo doing.

It

It is to no purpoſe to diſpute of what GOD might have done in the way of abſolute power and ſovereignty. He might have made a race of Creatures only to have ſerved him, without advancing their own happineſs, and this without the leaſt wrong or injuſtice. But it is infinitely more agreeable to that *immenſe*, *rich*, and *diffuſive Goodneſs* we adore in him, to render his Creatures happy by their duty and obedience. And it is matter of fact, that GOD has actually diſpoſed things ſo, that our obedience is the way to our happineſs; and conſequently, has made the *latter* a powerful motive to the *former*.

And as this is moſt worthy of infinite Mercy and Goodneſs, and moſt agreeable to human nature in general, as thus made and conſtituted; ſo it is eſpecially moſt agreeable to the preſent imperfect and depraved ſtate of mankind, in which, after all the reparations made by the Grace of GOD, our meaſures of goodneſs are too little and weak to allow us to act upon ſo ſublime a Principle as *that of GOD's Glory abſtracted from our own Felicity*. That would require another Conſtitution, and other Circumſtances than what we dare pretend to. For thoſe who act with all ſincere zeal and care from both theſe Principles in conjunction, find temptation enough to render it extremely difficult to hold on in the way of their duty notwithſtanding.

And therefore, to take away the one of theſe Motives, that is, *the Conſideration of our own Felicity*; beſides contradicting *the Divine Appointment and the Conſtitution of Human Nature*, in both which they are firmly united, is ſo far to take us off from the performance of Duty, as the loſs of a moſt powerful and engaging motive can be ſuppoſed to do. And if this be not to take a conſiderable ſtep towards the total neglect of it, I leave all the world to judge. And when men are once come to Neglect of their Duty, it is no wide ſtep from thence to Immorality and Profaneneſs. Which, tho' I believe not deſigned by many that advance theſe Notions

Notions, is yet the genuine Reſult and Conſequence of them.

And thus I have briefly propoſed the chief Uſes to be made of this great Doctrine of our Saviour's Reſurrection; and *of* our own Reſurrection, *as it follows from his.*

The reſurrection of the Body is, indeed, a very ſublime and myſterious Subject; and it is for that very Reaſon, no doubt, that the ſceptical humour of ſome People puts them on to pry ſo very nicely and curiouſly into it.

Men love to be buſie about things that are beyond them, inſtead of beſtowing their pains uſefully upon ſuch matters as are within their reach. I ſpeak this of thoſe perſons that ſeem to triumph in the unaccountableneſs of the *Reſurrection* of the Body from pure *phyſical* Principles, and inſult *Chriſtianity* with their little Queries upon that head; *How are the Dead raiſed? And with what Body do they come?* For my part, I think, the fitteſt anſwer to be returned to them, is that which the Apoſtle *Paul* gave to the Fools of his time, that aſked the ſame queſtion: *Thou Fool! that which thou ſoweſt, is not quickned except it die: And that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that Body which ſhall be—— But* GOD *giveth it a Body as it pleaſeth him.*

I think this is all that need be ſaid in the caſe. It is enough to me, that infinite wiſdom and power have undertaken to accompliſh the work. I am not ſollicitous about the way or *Modus*, in which it ſhall be brought to paſs; but reſt contented with the aſſurance given me, *that the thing itſelf ſhall be.* For *he is faithful that hath promiſed:* GOD hath ſaid it ſhall be ſo; and he is true, and able to make his word good. And upon this Foundation, and this alone, I defy all the objections that *Wit* or *Philoſophy* can make to the contrary. The credibility of the *Thing* depends upon the Credibility of the *Revelation*

lation. If the *New Teſtament*, which plainly reveals this Doctrine, be a *Divine* Book; then I have all the Satisfaction I need in the matter. After all the *Tranſmutations* and *Revolutions* poſſible to happen to a Syſtem of Matter in this ſublunary World, yet the Buſineſs is ſtill within the reach of Omnipotence; and he that firſt ſet the Syſtem together, can do it again, after infinitely more Separations and Changes than our ſhallow Intellects can ever form a Notion of. And what if our Bodies are in a ſtate of *continuat flux* and *alteration*, ſo that they are, *phyſically* ſpeaking, no day nor hour, the ſame that they were before? That GOD, to whoſe Power, Wiſdom and Faithfulneſs, we entirely leave the work of a *Reſurrection*, we are ſure will order the matter ſo, that it ſhall be truly and properly ſaid, that *This* and *That*, and the other perſon by Name who were once dead, are now revived and raiſed again. No matter what the *Idenity* is, or in what Senſe the raiſed Body may be ſaid to be the ſame.

Philoſophy has nothing to do here, and our *unbelieving Criticks* know ſo little of the common Works of GOD in the world, that they may well enough quit all Pretences to explain thoſe that are miraculous and extraordinary.

Preſent Nature will afford them matter enough for their Enquiries; and they need not look ſo far as the *Day of Judgment* for a Problem that ſhall have difficulty enough to puzzle them.

F I N I S.

REFE-

REFERENCES *to some Passages quoted in the foregoing Treatise.*

HAVING observed, that in some few places I have neglected mentioning what Page in an Author the passage I quote is to be found in, which is what I all along proposed to myself to do, as making most for the ease and satisfaction of the Reader; I was willing to set aside a page or two, which I hope the Reader will think not ill-bestowed, here at the end of the Book, for the supplying that Defect.

Page 195. That Passage of *Tertullian*, is *pag.* 240. Edit. Colon. Agrip. 1617.

Pag. 218. Place in *Eusebius*, is *pag.* 94. of Cap. Lib. & Edit. antea citat.

Page 219. *Arnob.* Lib. 2. Cont. Gent. *pag.* 52. Edit. Par. 1605.

Pag. 229 *Just. Mart.* Apol. 1. *pag.* 50. Ὁρῶν δὲ ἀφόβους πρὸς θάνατον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἄλλα νομιζόμενα φοβερὰ, ἐνενόουν ἀδύνατον εἶναι ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φιληδονίᾳ ὑπάρχειν αὐτοὺς· τίς γὰρ φιλήδονος &c. Edit. Par. 1636.

Pag. 265. *Just. Mart. pag.* 265. Lib. & Edit. citat.

Page 271. *Just. Mart. pag.* 345. Lib. & Edit. citat.

——Ibid. *Euseb. pag.* 218. Lib. citat

Page 300. *Euseb. pag.* 512. Lib. citat.

——Ibid. *August.* Epist. citat. *pag.* 7. Tom. 2. Edit. Par. 1635.

And

And St. *Auſtin* himſelf, Epiſt. 5. ad *Marcell.* even laughs at that pretended compariſon of *Apuleius* and *Apollonius* with *Jeſus Chriſt*-- *Quis autem vel riſu dignum non putet, quod* Apollonium, Apuleium, *cæteroſq; Magicarum artium peritiſſimos, conferre* Chriſto, *vel etiam præferre conantur!* p. 11.

Upon this account *Arnobius* challenges the enemies of *Chriſtianity* to produce but any one in the whole heathen world that ever did, by the help of all thoſe arts, but the thouſandth part of what our Saviour did—— *Poteſtis aliquem nobis deſignare, ex omnibus illis magis, qui unquam fuere per ſecula, conſimile aliquid* Chriſto *milleſima ex parte qui fecerit?* Lib. 1. pag. 31. edit. citat.

Page 301. *Tertul.* Apol. cap. 21. pag. 37. Edit. citat.----*Ea omnia*, (*viz.* concerning the Miracles, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of *Chriſt Jeſus*, before mentioned) Pilatus *& ipſe pro ſua conſcientia Chriſtianus* Cæſari *tunc* Tiberio *nuntiavit.*

And Apol. Cap. 5. pag. 23. ---Tiberius, *cujus tempore nomen Chriſtianum in ſeculum introivit, annuntiata ſibi, ex* Syria, Palæſtina, *quæ veritatem illius divinitatis revelaverant, retulit ad* ſenatum, *cum prerogativa ſuffragii ſui: Senatus, quia non ipſe probaverat, reſpuit.* Cæſar *in ſententia manſit, comminatus periculum accuſatoribus Chriſtianorum.*

Theſe accounts the aforeſaid father appeals to, with as much aſſurance as he does to thoſe concerning the *miraculous Eclipſe* at the Paſſion of our Saviour; which wonderful Phenomenon, he tells them (Apol. cap. 21. pag. 37. edit. citat.) they had recorded in their own *Archives:* and this is very probable, ſince the preternatural darkneſs, as alſo the convulſions of the earth at that time, are particularly taken notice of by *Phlegon* in his chronicle, as *Origen* tells us, in the 13th or 14th book of the ſame, Περὶ δὲ τοῦ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως, ἣ Βασιλεύοντος αὐτοῦ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐσταυρῶσθαι, καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γενομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς ἀνέσεσθε καὶ Φλέγων ἐν τῷ τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῳ τῶν ἰδίων τῶν χρονικῶν· Orig. lib. 2. Contr. Celſ. pag. 80. Edit. *Cantab.* 1677.

Eusebius also, as well as *Origen*, repeats the said testimony of *Phlegon* in his *Chronicon*, *An.* 2040. And *Scaliger*, in his annotations upon the same, besides the concurrent testimonies of profane authors as to the business of the *Earthquakes*, shews there were medals struck in *Tiberius*'s time that confirmed it.

The *Acts of Pilate* are directly quoted and appealed to by *Justin Martyr*, Apol. 2. pag. 84. Edit. citat.----- Θεραπεύειν πάσας νόσους ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστὸς προεφητεύθη· ὅτι δὲ ταῦτα ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου γενομένων μαθεῖν δύνασθε. And so again expressly, pag. 76. of the *same* Apology. And it seems but a very poor way of answering so plain and publick a testimony of fact, to say that *Justin* was too credulous in this case; as he is supposed to be in that of the *Sybilla Cumana*. All that I shall say to that matter is, that he tells us in his *Cohortatio ad Græcos*, that he was there in the country, saw the place with his own eyes, and had his informations concerning the *Sybil* from the inhabitants, amongst whom the account had passed as an unquestionable truth from generation to generation. And I cannot see what more can be required or expected of any person, who gives any sort of narration, in order to his being protected from ill treatment, and the scurrilous charge of credulity. Besides, if he was mistaken in his opinion of this *Sybil*, he had several very antient writers to bear him company in the mistake, and amongst the rest no less a person than his master *Plato*; who, as he makes out in the same place, had quite another opinion of the *Sybil* than some of the moderns have. And I never heard this celebrated *Grecian* Philosopher reflected upon for his credulity in this case: But now I remember, *Plato* was a *Heathen*; and *Justin* a *Christian*, and an Apologist for *Christianity*, and a most invincible one too; and this, with some people, is ground enough for a partial severity towards him. However, the learned Dr. *Grabe* observes in his annotations upon this passage of *Justin* (which he himself else intended

to

to have done) that the learned *Gerardus Joannes Voſſius* has vindicated this excellent father from all thoſe frivolous criticiſms. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 13. de Hiſtoricis Græcis.

As for thoſe *falſe and ſpurious Acts of* Pilate, we have an account of them in *Epiphanius*, de quartadecimanis, Hæreſ. 50. Lib. 2. Tom. 1. Edit. Par. 1622.

And *Euſebius* tells us, that even the children were made to learn them by heart, and repeated them in the ſchools every day: Ὅτι παῖδες ἀνὰ τὰ διδασκαλεῖα, Ἰησοῦν καὶ Πιλάτου τὰ καθ' ὑμᾶς πλασθέντα ὑπομνήματα, διὰ στόματος ἔχειν πᾶσαν ἔφεσιν ἐποίησαν. Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. 9. Cap. 7. But at Ch. 5. of the ſame book he gives a more ample and particular account of that matter: Πλασάμενοι δὲ τὰ Πιλάτου καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ὑπομνήματα, πάσης ἐμπλέα κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ βλασφημίας, &c. "Having feigned certain records con-"cerning *Pilate* and our Saviour, full of all manner "of blaſphemy againſt *Chriſt*; by the command of the "governour, they were diſperſed into all the territory "under his juriſdiction; ordering, by letters, that they "ſhould be made publick to all perſons in every place, "as well in the country as cities; and that ſchool-"maſters ſhould take care to teach them to their boys, "and make them get them by heart, inſtead of other "learning." [Τοῖς τε παισὶ τὰς γραμματοδιδασκάλους ἀντὶ μαθημάτων ταῦτα μελετᾶν, καὶ διὰ μνήμης κατέχειν παραδιδόναι] And then he goes on, and gives an account of ſome abominable practices of forcing certain profligate abandoned wretches, by threatnings of torments, to own themſelves *Chriſtians*, and to accuſe themſelves as guilty of whatever crimes the managers ſhould think fit to dictate to them. Now as to what *Euſebius* ſays of theſe *Acta Pilati*; was he credulous too? Was he miſtaken? Was he impoſed upon in his accounts? What an odd co-incidence it is, that *Juſtin Martyr*, and *he*, and *Epiphanius*, ſhould all happen to be out in a caſe of ſo notorious a nature, and ſo very likely to be true as this was, *viz.* *That a* Roman (governour, or, if you

will, a) *Procurator ſhould give an account to the Emperour and the Senate of things ſo very extraordinary*, and that happened in his own Province too, *as the life and actions of ſuch a perſon as* Jeſus Chriſt; *whom* Pilate *knew perſonally, had ſeen at his tribunal, and condemned to death at the earneſt requeſt of the* Jewiſh *Nation*; *and was upon the ſpot when the ſurprizing news of his Reſurrection firſt came abroad, and began to ſpread through the world.* In ſhort, if theſe accounts are authentick and good, (and I believe there is no body will ſcarce pretend to a *deciſive* proof to the contrary) the enemies of *Chriſtianity* have fully *quitted ſcores*, and are at leaſt *even* with the *Chriſtians* for whatever frauds ſome people (how juſtly I ſhall not now determine) ſurmiſe and conjecture they have been guilty of, in concealing or ſuppreſſing what ſome of their ſmarter adverſaries have objected againſt them. Thoſe practices, for certain, are infinitely hateful; and they could ſcarce be good *Chriſtians*, I think, that were guilty of them: And whatever good deſigns they might pretend, they were, if thoſe allegations are true, the greateſt enemies to *Chriſtianity*; in that they opened the mouths of its enemies, and repreſented it as if it were not proof againſt any, or all poſſible objections that could be made; and reflected upon the invincible evidence it carries along with itſelf, by attempting to ſupport it by ſuch baſe and degrading artifices.

AN

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APPENDIX,

Containing a DISSERTATION on that QUESTION,

Whether Conſciouſneſs *and* Thought *can be the Reſult of mere* Matter *and* Motion.

With ſome REFLECTIONS concerning the *Nature of GOD*, of *Human Souls*, and the *Univerſe* in General.

By HUMPHRY DITTON.

SECT. I.

AS one truth naturally infers and leads to another, ſo likewiſe does one error or abſurdity tend to uſher in and make way for another; inſomuch, that we often ſee men are drawn in to eſpouſe ſuch notions and opinions, as at firſt they never intended nor thought of, merely in conſequence of ſome *Hypotheſis* they have already advanced, and which muſt be defended, whatever inconveniences it runs them upon.

Having firſt ſet out with *one wrong principle*, (I mean wrong in itſelf, whether they argue upon the matter, and know it to be wrong, or not) they find that, in order to

the making of that good, they muſt neceſſarily have recourſe to *another*, and from thence to a *third*, and ſo on, till they have drawn out a long chain of wretched *Notions* and *Hypotheſes*; each link of which has, notwithſtanding a certain and regular dependance upon that which goes before, and that which comes after.

I make no queſtion, but that idle notion of *Matter's Thinking*, which has been ſo induſtriouſly propagated by our *Modern Deiſts*, is in reality no other than one of the links of ſuch a chain.

For ſuppoſe we were to begin with the notion of a *Future State.*

This is certainly a very diſagreeable one to men, who, by being entirely at their own diſpoſe in this World, have made it their intereſt that there ſhould be no World to come, and do therefore, undoubtedly, paſſionately deſire there may not be any ſuch ſtate, and take as much pains to perſuade themſelves that there is not: Tho', I am apt to believe, they do for the moſt part ſtrive to very little purpoſe.

To overturn, therefore, this ungrateful ſcheme; according to which it is not only poſſible, but very probable, that men may be puniſhed in another ſtate, for their irregular conduct and behaviour in this; the firſt ſtep muſt be to deny that the *Soul exiſts ſeparately from the Body*.

And becauſe this cannot be done with any tolerable ſhew of Reaſon, while it ſtands granted and allowed that the Soul and Body are *two diſtinct Subſtances*, therefore you muſt of courſe *take away all ſpecifical and eſſential diſtinction between it and the Body*, and make the whole of man of a piece. So that as the one part, *viz.* that which is called *Body*, is evidently nothing but a Machine, or mere Syſtem of Matter; ſo likewiſe the other, *viz.* that which is called *Mind*, muſt be made the ſame kind of ſubſtance too.

But

But becauſe it is impoſſible that this ſhould be, unleſs *both* have the ſame eſſential powers and properties; therefore you muſt likewiſe inveſt them *both* with the ſame properties and attributes.

And from hence the next ſtep is plain, *viz. That matter muſt be aſſerted to be a thinking ſubſtance*; capable of *Joy*, *Deſire*, *Argumentation* and *Reflection*, with whatever elſe is commonly attributed to a ſoul.

But then, becauſe the actions of the *mind* imply *vigour* and *livelineſs*, which the mere parts of matter, conſidered in themſelves, promiſe nothing of; therefore you muſt ſuppoſe them to be briſkly moved and agitated: Then a ſyſtem of them may become a ſoul, and be capable of performing all thoſe actions of thinking ſubſtances, which are comprehended under the general names of *Thought* and *Volition*.

And now there is no danger of a *future ſtate*, nor no room for the talk of Heaven and Hell: For tho' matter, diſpoſed in a *regular ſyſtem*, may think and reflect; yet at death, when the whole ſyſtem itſelf is put into the utmoſt confuſion, to be ſure there is an end of all thought and reflection. So that the joys and miſeries of an after-ſtate, if they are not all of them impoſſible in the very nature of the thing, yet at beſt they are but the fictions and inventions of a ſet of unphiloſophical Prieſts, who know not the powers of matter and motion, and how thought and reaſon depend upon them; but tell people theſe tales of a life to come, only to over-awe and frighten them, and by that means to have an opportunity of doing whatever they pleaſe with them in the preſent life.

Here now is a ſcheme, each ſtep of which naturally leads to another. Nor can a man well take one of them, without being tempted to go through all the reſt. Let him begin with making *matter and motion think*; and he ſhall end with making the *Goſpel an Impoſture*. Or let him lay down this for his firſt principle, *That the*

Chriſtian Religion *is a cheat*; and he will miſs his way very ſtrangely, if he does not come to this concluſion at laſt, *That matter is a thinking ſubſtance.*

Nor are we to imagine, that the *Modern Deiſts* have cultivated and ſet about this notion of *Matter's thinking*, with any other deſign or view than that of undermining the very foundations of *Chriſtianity*. They are ſenſible that the *Chriſtian Religion* is not to be *directly* and *immediately* attacked, with any proſpect of ſucceſs; but there might be ſomething done by *remote* and *covert methods*, ſuch as that of broaching *Hypotheſes*, which, under a ſeeming *philoſophical diſguiſe*, ſhould do all the fatal execution, which naked arguments could never accompliſh. And ſuch a one is that which we are now conſidering. It looks likes a mere piece of *Philoſophick Theory*, and as if it were calculated only to ſolve the wonderful *Phænomena* of *Human Nature*: To ſhew us, upon clear and intelligible principles, what it is to *underſtand*, to *will*, and to *remember*; without being obliged to have recourſe to ſuch canting terms, as *ſoul*, *immaterial ſubſtance*, and the like; which carry as little ſenſe and meaning along with them, as *Ariſtotle's* ἐντελέχεια or *occult Qualities*.

But what aſſiſtance this *Hypotheſis* can afford us towards the ſolution of thoſe *myſterious problems* of *Human Nature*, we ſhall ſee by and by. We ſhall ſee how conſiſtently with the principles of *true Philoſophy* theſe Gentlemen can ſhew us how we may *perceive*, *argue*, and *reflect* upon things by the help of their *matter* and *motion*. In the mean time I ſhall only ſay thus much, That I am well ſatisfied this *Hypotheſis* never yet did, nor never will do any harm, by the *Philoſophy* it carries along with it. And that I know of nothing that can be ſo great a temptation to a man to doubt, whether it may not be true, or no, as to conſider that ſome people have been capable of believing it. For if any way of *thinking* at all could ever poſſibly be the effect of *pure mechaniſm*, ſo ſluggiſh and irregular a one as this bids as fair for being ſo as any whatſoever.

SECT.

SECT. II.

BUT after all, to ſpeak my mind freely in the caſe, I muſt needs ſay, I look upon all this talk of *matter* and *motion's thinking* to be mere *banter* and *pageantry*, and not the effect of any real opinion or belief in the major part of them that ſet up for the defence of it. I am afraid it is no breach of charity to believe, that the reaſon why they advance it, is not ſo much becauſe they conclude it to be *true*, as becauſe they find it *fit* and *convenient* to ſerve a turn.

It is true, indeed, (as we have obſerv'd already) that the notion itſelf is, in one ſenſe, a regular and conſequential ſtep enough, and follows very fairly from ſome other principles laid down. But then it is one thing to maintain a notion in relation to a *ſcheme* that requires it, and another thing to do it upon the ſcore of the clear *evidence of truth* which it carries along with it, by which the Underſtanding is fully convinced and compelled to give its aſſent thereto. And the reaſon why I cannot defend myſelf from believing that the underſtandings of our *Deiſts* are not laid under very ſtrong convictions of the truth of this *Hypotheſis* is, becauſe it is really ſo very vain and ridiculous a one, that it is not to be imagined that men of good ſenſe and learning, (as many of theſe Gentlemen are) and thoſe ſuch profeſſed enemies to all bigotry and credulity, and that rally others ſo freely as they do for a ſlight and perfunctory examination of the matters of their belief, ſhould ever be ſerious in the defence of ſuch a ſyſtem as this is. Indeed, people that are trained up in *ſuperſtition* and *implicit faith*, and are taught from their very cradles to believe every thing that is told them by the guides of their ſouls, tho' ever ſo repugnant to common ſenſe and reaſon; theſe may, by virtue of ſuch mighty prejudices, poſſibly bring themſelves, by degrees, to believe very odd and extravagant things;

things; tho' otherwiſe they be perſons of ſagacity and good Underſtanding, and ſuch as would be very able to find out their own miſtakes, did they but allow themſelves the liberty of arguing upon them. But this is not the caſe of the Gentlemen we are now talking of. For as it was never any rule amongſt them to believe as any Church or Party believes, or to ſhape their own notions and opinions by the model of other people's; ſo they have always ſet up for quite another ſort of management; as appears by the laudable Titles of *Rationaliſts*, *Free-thinkers*, and others of that ſort, which they have dignify'd themſelves withal. And tho' they will not allow the *Chriſtians* to take any ſuch rational Courſes; yet it has ever been, as they tell us, a Maxim amongſt themſelves, *To admit nothing as true, but what is evidently and manifeſtly proved to be ſo, upon Principles of indiſputable force and authority.*

Now, I ſay, to ſee Men of ſuch a character, Men ſo fond of truth, ſo ſtrict and rigorous in their enquiries after it, and ſo nice and cautious in giving their aſſent; to ſee theſe ſtand in the defence of ſo very obnoxious an *Hypotheſis* as this is, is enough to make a Man queſtion whether they are or can be in good earneſt or no. However, I leave that matter to themſelves; and if I am out in my Surmiſe, I crave their excuſe for it: But it is plain they give a handle to the miſtake, if it be one. In the mean time theſe Gentlemen themſelves think it no breach of charity to ſuſpect, that ſome perſons of a certain Church, who ſtand in it, *That a bit of dry Bread is real Fleſh and Blood*, and are ſo poſitive and hot in the matter, that they would ſacrifice all the World about them, that will not belye all the ſenſes and faculties of human nature, in ſaying as they ſay: That theſe People do indeed know better things, and are much wiſer than they would be taken to be in that *reſpect*. And when a Man ſhall come and tell me, that a Portion of ſluggiſh matter, in which, by all the obſervations and experi-

experiments I can make of it, I can find no more ſigns of *Thought* and *Counſel*, than I can of *Fleſh* and *Blood* in a conſecrated Wafer; that this lump, I ſay, *reaſons*, and makes *Syllogiſms*, and has ſuch ſort of faculties as mankind have: I muſt confeſs, I cannot forbear telling myſelf that this man *acts a Part*; and talks of things that he no more believes, than thoſe Gentlemen do, who aſſure me, that what I conclude to be mere Bread, by its colour, taſte, ſpecifick gravity, and all poſſible methods of trial, is, for all that, no more *Bread* than it is *Iron*, or *Gold*, or any other ſubſtance in the World. I do not ſay, that the contradiction is ſo *palpably* and *notoriouſly groſs* in one Caſe as in the other; but I ſay, I ſhould think a man to be as much *in jeſt* in one Caſe as in the other, becauſe in either Caſe he tells me what no man in his right wits can believe.

And really, the very language of this *Hypotheſis* is almoſt as offenſive as that of *Tranſubſtantiation* itſelf.

It ſhocks a man to hear *Underſtanding* coupled with *Round* and *Square*; and *Thoughts* talked of in ſuch a ſort of Stile, as the *Geometricians* do of their lines and figures. I can no more imagine how *Prudence* and *Sagacity* can be the reſult of a Whirlpool of fluid Matter, or *Temper* and *Diſpoſition* the mere effect of ſome motion, propagated in ſuch or ſuch directions; than I can conceive how *Accidents* can exiſt ſeparately from their *Subjects*; or a body, which my eyes tell me is confined to this or that place, to be in ten thouſand others at the ſame time. If a man ſhould tell me, that all the fine flights in *Poetry*, or the ſteps of the moſt elaborate *Mathematical Demonſtrations*, were nothing but the rolling of little Cones or Spheres in the Brain; that this man was a *Linguiſt*, the other a *Philoſopher*, and a third a *Stateſman*, by the mere velocity, ſize and figure of Particles: I ſhould not think he talked much more intelligibly, than the forementioned Gentlemen do upon the myſteries of the *Wafer*.

There

There is ſomething ſo intolerably awkard and diſagreeable, ſo perverſe and repugnant, in this ſort of dialect; that one would conclude even from thence, if there were no more, that GOD and nature never intended it ſhould be uſed amongſt mankind; and therefore never laid any foundation for the uſe of it, by making of us after ſuch a manner as ſhould require it.

It will be objected here, perhaps, *That people do not uſe themſelves to connect and compare theſe terms, of Thought, Matter and Motion, together; and that it is owing only to that diſuſe, and the prejudice ariſing therefrom, that they form notions of them as repugnant and inconſiſtent with one another.* But, pray, are there not as many prejudices that ariſe from too much uſe and familiarity with certain notions and phraſes; as do from too little uſe, or a total diſuſe of them? Do not ſome men by long cuſtom and practice, bring themſelves to believe that ſuch and ſuch things are juſt and true, which yet in their own nature are far from being ſo; and they only apprehend them to be ſo, becauſe they have uſed themſelves to go on in ſuch a particular road and method of thinking? If ſo, why may not it as well be a mere prejudice on one ſide, to apprehend a ſuitableneſs and a conſiſtency between the notions we are ſpeaking of; as it may be on the other, to apprehend an unſuitableneſs and repugnancy between them?

For men to throw all the prejudice and prepoſſeſſion upon their adverſaries, and take none at all to their own ſhare; is a ridiculous piece of vanity, and deſerves no other anſwer but ſilence and contempt.

However, we ſhall effectually diſcover on which ſide the prejudice lies, when we have found out on which ſide the impoſſibility and the abſurdity lies. For it is certain that no man can ever be led, by fair ſteps, to an impertinent or an impoſſible concluſion.

Now we ſhall eaſily ſee where the abſurdity lies, when we have thorowly diſcuſſed the queſtion lying before

fore us, viz. *How matter and motion can ſolve or account for the Phenomena of Thought and Conſciouſneſs.*

SECT. III.

TO prevent all cavelling upon words and terms, I deſire it may be obſerv'd, that by Matter I underſtand what mankind generally underſtand by that term; *viz. A ſolid ſubſtance, capable of diviſion, figure and motion.*

And when I ſpeak of accounting for the Phenomena of thought and perception by *matter and motion*, I would not be thought to exclude any of the other properties of it; but ſuppoſe them all to be taken into the account, as far forth as they can conduce, in the opinion of any defender of this *Hypotheſis*, to the ſolution of the Phenomena of *intelligent ſubſtances.*

Whatever ſervice can be done by *ſolidity*, *diviſibility*, *figure* and *motion*, all in conjunction, towards a ſatisfactory account of theſe appearances; let it be done. I mention *motion* only, not becauſe I leave the others out, but becauſe I include them in the notion of *matter*, whoſe properties they are. For the ſame reaſon likewiſe, I do not mention, in ſo many words, *the effects or reſults of the various compoſitions of theſe properties with one another:* becauſe they are all included under the *properties* themſelves, from the *compoſitions* of which they reſult. All the poſſible compoſitions and variations of figure and motion, *ex. gr.* are, and will be for ever, nothing elſe but figure and motion. So that when I enquire whether *matter* and *motion* can produce thought, I would be underſtood to enquire, *Whether what we call thought in an intelligent ſubſtance, can be the mere reſult of matter, with any or all of its properties, or any or all the poſſible changes and combinations of them and their effects?* and becauſe, after all, there may ſtill ſeem to be room left for

for Quibbles, *founded upon ſome (pretended) poſſible unknown powers and properties of matter, by which it may be able to think and will*; as alſo, *upon the infinite Power of GOD, who may*, (as we are told) *endow ſome ſyſtems of matter with a power of thinking, as he himſelf ſhall pleaſe or think fit:* I ſhall take theſe notions into the queſtion too; and therefore, to render it as full and compleat as may be, ſhall divide it into theſe *three* diſtinct parts.

Firſt, *Whether thinking and willing can poſſibly be the effect of any, or all the known Properties and Affections of Matter.* I ſay, the *known* properties of *matter.* For I think it well worth my while to enquire into this in the firſt place, and that very particularly too; becauſe I am ſenſible that (whatever is or may be pretended, of any poſſible effects of *Almighty Power, and the unknown properties of matter*, yet) the main ſtreſs of the Controverſy reſts here, and here only.

Secondly, I ſhall conſider what is to be ſaid with reſpect to *thoſe poſſible unknown qualities and affections of matter*, from whence we are told thought and volition may ariſe; ſuppoſing it to be allowed that they cannot proceed from thoſe affections and properties which are known to us.

Thirdly, What is to be ſaid with reſpect to that other Notion, *Of GOD Almighty's endowing ſome Portions of matter with theſe Faculties of Thinking and Willing.*

SECT. IV.

FOR the *Firſt* of theſe.

It will inevitably follow, that thoſe actions or operations of intelligent ſubſtances, which are comprehended under the general name of *Thought*, cannot be the reſult of any mere properties or affections of matter, if it be demonſtrated, *That ſuch actions or operations are abſolutely repugnant to, and inconſiſtent with thoſe fixed*

fixed and eſtabliſhed laws, which matter itſelf with all its properties and affections, and in all its parts and ſyſtems, is evidently ſubjected to.

If thoſe laws will not allow or permit ſuch effects to come to paſs, as muſt neceſſarily come to paſs, in order to the production of ſuch Phenomena, as thoſe which we call by the names of *Reaſoning*, *Reflection*, *Volition*, and the like; it will be certain to a demonſtration, that they cannot be the reſult of any of the aforeſaid properties or affections of *matter*. For no affection, which is incompatible with the conſtant and certain laws a ſubject is placed under, can ever reſult from that ſubject, or any thing eſſentially belonging to it.

So that the point now to be demonſtrated is this, *viz. That the actions or operations of thinking ſubſtances* (or the Phenomena obſervable in ſuch ſubſtances) *are utterly incompatible with the laws, to which, matter, with all its known properties*, (that is, a ſolid, figured, diviſible, moveable ſubſtance) *is ſubjected.*

And this will be abundantly made out in the following propoſitions.

PROP. I.

TO argue, *or* infer *one thing from another, is wholly irreconcileable to, and ſimply impoſſible to be effected by any mere mechanical laws.*

I have occaſionally ſpoken ſomething to this point already, PART I. SECT. XIV. However, it being ſo very clear and convincing a demonſtration of the utter impoſſibility of all *mechanical thought and reflection*, I ſhall purſue it a little more particularly in this place: tho' I muſt needs ſay, the whole controverſy, is ſo perfect a jeſt, that I am almoſt aſhamed to talk ſeriouſly upon it. But the extravagant whimſies of mankind have made it neceſſary. In order to this, therefore, I muſt

muſt premiſe, what I am ſure there can be no difficulty of allowing, *viz. That the ſame parts of matter cohering together after the ſame manner, moving in the ſame direction, and with the ſame impetus or velocity, in the ſame ſpace or ſyſtem; will continue to produce the very ſame effect, whatever that effect be, which was once produced by them.* And therefore, that if thought and reflection in intelligent ſubſtances be the reſult of any ſort of motion or agitation, of any preſſure or contranitency of the ſolid, figured, diviſible parts of matter; it is neceſſary, that in the production of different ſorts of *acts*, of *thought* and *reflection*, if all other circumſtances continue the ſame, the circumſtance of *motion* ſhould be ſome way diverſify'd, either as to *velocity*, or direction, or both: and, *vice verſa*, if in different acts of thought and reflection, the circumſtance of motion continues unvaried, as to velocity and direction; there muſt needs be ſome variation in the other circumſtances.

Becauſe, I ſay, all things continuing the ſame, the ſame effects in a caſe of *mere Mechaniſm* muſt neceſſarily reſult; and, by conſequence, it would be impoſſible that there ſhould be any *variety* or *diverſity* of thought and reflection; which yet in plain fact and experience we find there is. This premiſed, the propoſition is thus made out. When I collect, or *infer*, one thing from another; I am conſcious to myſelf of two diſtinct modes, or kinds of cogitation. [I do not care by what name it is called, provided the thing intended be but allowed, *viz. A real diverſity in the mode or manner of my Cogitation.*] By the one of theſe I perceive an aſſent to the truth of thoſe propoſitions, commonly called *Premiſes*, from whence I am to make what I call an inference. By the other, I perceive an aſſent to the truth of a certain propoſition, reſulting from the former, which is called the *Concluſion*, or the inference itſelf; and becomes the object or matter of my aſſent, upon the perception I have of the neceſſary relation and connection between it

it and thoſe premiſes, which I had before found to be perfectly ſuitable and agreeable to my reaſon.

Theſe acts, or modes of cogitation, wherein I aſſen, to the premiſes, and to the concluſion drawn from themt are evidently of a quite different kind and nature: Becauſe in the concluſion, I perceive the agreement of two things with one another, by the means of the prior diſtinct agreement of each of thoſe things to ſome third thing; which third thing is not actually found in the concluſion, tho' it were ſo in both the premiſes.

And therefore, I ſay, there is a quite different ſort or mode of cogitation in theſe two caſes: Becauſe there is a real intrinſick difference between perceiving the ſeparate agreement of two things with a third thing; and perceiving the agreement of thoſe two things with one another, by the invention of that third thing.

Now then, ſince, according to the preſent *Hypotheſis*, all this is to be derived from the mere ſolid, figured, diviſible, moveable parts of Matter; it is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to account for this manifeſt diverſity of effects, that the ſaid parts of Matter ſhould have undergone ſome change of ſtate and circumſtance. For all things continuing in the ſame ſtate, the ſame effects muſt ariſe, as was ſhewn juſt now; and, conſequently, there could be no concluſion drawn from the premiſes laid down.

Now, whatever change of ſtate or circumſtance has been, muſt of neceſſity have been, with reſpect either to the Solidity, the Diviſion, the Figure, or the Motion of the parts of Matter, or all theſe together. For we are arguing now upon the *known* properties of Matter; and, I preſume, theſe are all that we do know. So that the *change of State* we look for, muſt neceſſarily be found in ſome, or all of theſe, if it be found at all: And if not, then either it is not Matter of fact, that we argue and reaſon; or if it be, then thoſe operations are impoſſible ever to be effected by theſe principles.

Now, I believe, I may take it for granted, that no *Materialiſt* whatſoever will ſuppoſe in this caſe any change in the *Solidity*, *Coheſion*, or *Configuration* of the parts of matter; but think a change in the point of *motion* ſufficient to do the buſineſs. And, indeed, I believe it will be the beſt way to lay the ſtreſs of the matter there: for beſides that all the ſame difficulties which preſs them in the ſuppoſition of a *change of motion*, will alſo preſs them in the ſuppoſition of a *change of Solidity*, *Coheſion*, or *Configuration*; there will, as I take it, be ſome new ones accruing over and above.

Upon which account, therefore, whether they are aware of any ſuch difficulties or no, I will fix upon the article of *Motion*; and demonſtrate the impoſſibility of any new ſtate in that reſpect, to account for the different acts, modes, ſorts, or kinds of cogitation, in the buſineſs of *Argumentation*.

It is paſt all doubt, now-a-days, amongſt men of any taſte in *true Philoſophy*, that as the parts of *Matter* which are at *Reſt*, cannot exchange that ſtate for the contrary one of *Motion*, unleſs determined thereto by the influence of ſome *external agent*; ſo thoſe which are actually determined to move in any ſort of direction, will continue to move therein, till they are likewiſe compelled to exchange that direction for another, into which they are put by ſome other *mover* from abroad: And that the *change of Motion*, in ſuch a caſe, is always proportional to, and propagated in the ſame direction with the force impreſſed. So that, therefore, when any ſort of Motion is once commenced amongſt the parts of Matter, if theſe laws are true, it can neither be propagated with a *new impetus*, nor in a *new direction*, without the intervention of a *new mover*, qualified in both reſpects to introduce ſuch an alteration.

Now, ſince it is plain, that in *Ratiocination*, where I infer one thing from another, and another thing from that inference, and a third from thence, and ſo on, there is

is an infinity of different modes of cogitation; and likewiſe, ſince theſe are all, by the *Hypotheſis*, but the different ſtates of the ſolid, figured, diviſible parts of Matter, with reſpect to *velocity* and *direction*; therefore it is neceſſary that they ſhould have been put into theſe different ſtates by the impulſe of ſome foreign mover; *For they cannot change their own condition, and throw themſelves out of one motion and direction into another.*

Let this mover now be what it will, it muſt ſtill be Matter; for, by the *Hypotheſis*, we have to do with nothing elſe but Matter. But then, ſince this mover is the cauſe of Motion otherwhere, it muſt be moved or acted on itſelf; for otherwiſe it could not produce a change of Motion in other contiguous parts of Matter.

Therefore there muſt needs be ſome other *prior* mover ſtill, according to the forementioned laws. And for the ſame reaſon there muſt be another *prior* to the former, and ſo on to *infinity*; and this muſt be the caſe, in every individual act of reaſon and argumentation: Which is ſuch horrid unphiloſophical nonſenſe, that it is no more to be endured, than the running upon it is poſſible to be avoided, in bringing ſuch a *Phenomenon* as this to the teſt of the rigorous laws of *Matter* and *Motion.*

And therefore it is beyond all poſſible rational doubt true, as the propoſition aſſerts, *viz. That Inference and Argumentation are wholly inconſiſtent with, and ſimply impoſſible ever to be effected by any mere Mechanical Laws.* Q. E. D.

Schol. It is plain, that the Matter turns here, *upon the impoſſibility of a change of Motion and Direction, in the pure mechanical production of one thought from another.* This will ever be the invincible difficulty, and the certain confutation of that vain *Hypotheſis.* For as long as Matter is ſubject to ſuch laws as it is; it is certain this can never be. Each new mode of Thought is a *new ſtate of Motion, Coheſion, Figure, or Diviſion*; which cannot be

effected but by the real action of ſome other matter. And this will inevitably lead us on to an *infinite progreſſion of agents and movers*; nor is there any ſtopping at a certain *determinate* number, without involving equally great abſurdities, as in running on *ad infinitum*. Perhaps theſe Gentlemen may be apt to think otherwiſe; but if they conſider the matter well, they will find it to be ſo.

PROP. II.

THE exerciſes of Will, *in thinking ſubſtances, conſpicuous in an* arbitrary *ſuſpenſion, ſucceſſion, and repetition of* Thoughts, *are utterly impoſſible in a ſyſtem of mere Matter and Motion.*

I hope there will be no miſunderſtanding ariſing here, from my uſe of the term *Will*; as being what a *Materialiſt* (ſome at leaſt) would, perhaps, make a very great difficulty of allowing. But, that we may on neither ſide hide ourſelves in a miſt of words, I mean here by *Will*, nothing but *that principle or power in thinking ſubſtances, by which they are enabled either to do a thing, or to let it alone.* And ſure we have ſuch a power as this; elſe all the *Deiſts*, *Hobbiſts*, and *Materialiſts* in the world would be of our opinion, in matters which now they pretend to diſpute with us. For we find they have a power to chuſe and embrace their *own* notions, and to let ours alone. And tho' they may call this by what name they pleaſe, yet mankind have generally agreed to call it by the name of *Will*; and by that name I ſhall alſo call it, becauſe I know of none more proper and expreſſive of our conceptions in this matter than this term is. However, I mean no more by it, than what I have already explained; nor can any man deny it, without *demonſtrating the truth of it, by his very denial.* So inevitable is the neceſſity of running upon flat contradictions, when men ſet up to diſpute plain matter of fact in their own natures and conſtitutions.

As

As for the proof of the *propoſition*, it follows eaſily from what was demonſtrated in the *laſt*. For to *ſuſpend* a Thought, in this *Hypotheſis*, is to *put an end to that particular ſtate of Motion, wherein the being and exerciſe of that Thought conſiſted.* To *change* or *divert* from one to another, is to alter one ſtate of Motion or another; and to *repeat* the ſame Thought again, is to bring the parts of matter into the ſame circumſtances of velocity and direction that they were once in, after divers intervening changes and interruptions.

Now theſe Phenomena are abſolutely inconſiſtent with any laws of mere Mechaniſm in the univerſe.

For as no Motion can be deſtroyed without the poſitive action of contrary movers, or the reſiſtance of impediments; ſo neither can the parts of Matter be turned from one direction to another, or, after various ſucceſſions and changes of Motion, ever poſſibly recover the ſame ſtate and circumſtances again, unleſs upon one of theſe two accounts following.

For either there are *material agents at hand, ready determined to produce theſe particular effects, of ſuch and ſuch velocities and directions:* Or we muſt ſuppoſe, *the mere parts of matter, by ſome innate or inherent power, able to determine themſelves to the production of theſe effects.* If there be material agents ready determined to the production of theſe effects, they muſt needs be determined thereunto by other agents or movers; and then there is no remedy, but we muſt run on into an *infinite progreſſion*, as before. If they determine themſelves to theſe actions, then *Matter is made a ſelf-moving, ſelf-directing ſubſtance, capable of acting, without being acted upon:* Which (tho' as boldly, as ignorantly and precariouſly, aſſerted by ſome modern Philoſophaſters, yet) at once deſtroys all that the world has ever called by the name of NATURAL PHILOSOPHY; ever ſince they have left mere *cant* and *talk* in theſe matters, for ſolid *experiment* and *demonſtration.* The conſequence therefore is, *That*

there is nothing in all the known powers and affections of Matter, from whence there is any poſſibility of deducing thoſe inſtances of arbitrary and voluntary determination, that ſhifting and changing, thoſe ſtrange and ſudden returns, reflections, and tranſitions in Thought; which, by experience, we find it is in our power to make. And therefore I rightly conclude, that theſe Phenomena are utterly impoſſible ever to be in a ſyſtem of mere Matter and Motion. *Q. E. D.*

Schol. That *Matter is not a ſelf-moving ſubſtance*, is, without many words, thus palpably evident.

If Matter has a power of ſelf-Motion, then *it is either according to ſome one particular and determinate direction:*

Or elſe, *Equally to all directions in general:*

Or elſe, *To ſuch and ſuch directions alone, as ſhall be determined, by its own innate judgment and choice, as moſt proper and convenient for it to move in upon any emergency that happens.*

If its power of ſelf-Motion were only according to ſome one determinate direction; then, *moſt certainly, it would never move in any other but that.* But now our ſenſes teſtify to us, that Matter moves in an infinite number of various and different directions. And therefore the firſt *Hypotheſis* is falſe.

Again, A power to move in any, or all directions in general, *is to be abſolutely indifferent and undetermined as to any:* Which is to have no power of ſelf Motion at all; becauſe a power of moving every way equally and alike, is a power of moving no way; that is, a power of not moving: Which makes the ſecond *Hypotheſis* an abſolute contradiction.

Laſtly, That the ſelf-moving power of Matter does not reſpect certain directions, upon ſet *counſel* and *choice*, according to particular emergencies and occaſions, is demonſtrable upon theſe two accounts.

Firſt,

Firſt, That, in *fact*, Matter does ever obey this univerſal rule of accommodating itſelf to the Motion and Direction of the Mover; and not to the Requirements of any particular occaſion or emergency.

Secondly, That, in an infinite number of caſes, it is plain, either that matter does not act from judgment and choice at all; or elſe, *that GOD has endowed it with a power of judging and chuſing only that which is worſe and moſt inconvenient for itſelf:* And this amounts, in conſequence, to as much as the former.

Now for this reaſon I affirm, that Matter is not, nor cannot poſſibly be a ſelf-moving ſubſtance: And let any of our *Materialiſts*, who have without any face of proof as confidently affirmed that it is, ſhew me wherein the argument I have made uſe of is in any reſpect defective.

PROP. III.

A Power of Senſation *or* Perception *of Objects, is never to be accounted for by any preſſure or endeavour, any action, re-action or reſiſtance, of the corporeal organ.*

This is directly contrary to Mr. *Hobb*'s doctrine, as we find it in his *Leviathan*, and his *Phyſicks* too.

Phantaſma, ſays he, *eſt ſentiendi actus.*

And that we may know what this *Phantaſma* is, he philoſophiſes upon the matter, and gives us this account of the nature and production of it: *Ex quo intelligitur, ſenſionis immediatam cauſam eſſe in eo.* Quod ſenſionis organum primum tangit & premit. *Si enim organi pars extima prematur; illa cadente, premeter quoque pars quæ verſus interiora illi proxima eſt; & ita propagatur preſſio, ſive motus ille, per partes organi omnes, uſque ad intimam.* This is the *external* cauſe or origin of the *Phantaſma*; as for the *internal* and more immediate one, he deſcribes it thus: *Quoniam autem motui ab objecto, per media, ad*

organi partem intimam propagato, ſit aliqua totius organi reſiſtentia ſive re-actio, *per motum ipſius organi internum naturalem; ſit propterea conatui ab objecto, conatus ab organo contrarius: Ut cum conatus ille ad intima, ultimus actus ſit eorum qui fiunt in actu ſenſionis; tum demum,* ex ea re-actione *aliquandiu durante,* ipſum exiſtit phantaſma; *quod propter conatum verſus externa, ſemper videtur tanquam aliquid ſitum extra organum.* [Hobbs *de Senſione & Motu Animali.*]

And he does the ſame again in his *Leviathan*, cap. 1. where he talks of the counter-preſſure or reſiſtance of the *heart*, to the continued motion, propagated from external objects; which re-action, or conatus, extending *ad extra*, appears itſelf to be (*aliquid externum*) ſomething without us; and ſo, according to this *Hypotheſis*, conſtitutes our ſenſation or perception of thoſe objects.

This is his account of the Matter. And, indeed, thoſe that read his *Phænomena Naturæ*, will ſcarce find any one conſiderable *Phenomenon* there ſolved more intelligibly or philoſophically than this of *Senſation:* So unlucky a hand had he at ſolving *Phyſical*, as well as *Mathematical* Problems.

Nor have any of the reſt of the modern *Materialiſts* been more fortunate that he in their explications of *Nature*. A remarkable inſtance of which we have in Monſieur *Des Cartes*, who, tho' a moſt skilful and excellent *Mathematician*, has yet done little elſe than carried on one continued chain of blunder and paroligiſm thro' his whole *Principia*, and but little better neither in his *Tractatus de Homine*. But as fondly as that Philoſophy of his has been hugged and received in the world, I make little doubt but the ſubtle author intended it, either as a *pure romantick* entertainment, (and ſo has horribly impoſed upon his ſerious admirers) or as a foundation for ſomething worſe.

But this by the by: Our buſineſs now is to ſhew, how far ſhort all the mechanical action and re-action of

of matter comes of a genuine Explication of the *Phenomenon* of *Perception*.

The truth of it is, it is no ſolution, no explication of the matter at all; but leaves it ſtill, in all reſpects, as much in the dark as ever.

A motion or preſſure propagated from an object, produces a counter-preſſure or re-action in my organ. True: But what is this to the buſineſs of Perception? *How does this puſhing outwards tend to make me conſcious, knowing, or apprehenſive of this object?* It were to be wiſhed, that ſome of Mr. *Hobb*'s followers would explain this matter a little. For without this, they had as good ſay nothing; becauſe they do not come up to the caſe, nor ſpeak to the main point in hand. How is this reciprocal agitation of an *eye* or an *ear*, my apprehenſion of the thing ſeen or heard? I can eaſily conceive what a man means, when he tells me of *re-action*; but when he tells me, that that mere endeavour of the parts of the material organ *ad extra*, is my perceiving of a thing, he leaves me utterly ignorant of what Perception is: *Becauſe I can find no ſimilitude nor relation between mere vibrations or undulations of ſome fine threds or fibrillæ in the Machine, and that acquaintance which I have with an object in what I call an act of Perception.*

And I ſhould underſtand him every whit as well, if he told me that *motion* was green or blue, or *ſound* triangular or ſquare; as that *ſenſation* is re-action, and *conſciouſneſs of an object* the mere *Conatus* of the trembling organ towards it.

But then, that which (I take it) does moſt effectually ſhew the vanity and falſity of this *Hypotheſis*, is this, *viz. That the re-action of the material organ can never poſſibly account for that Perception which we have of objects, as ſpecifically different from each other.*

For the act of Perception being, according to this *Hypotheſis*, the mere re-action of the *Senſory*; it is moſt evident, that our different ſenſations of objects muſt be derived

derived from the different re-action of the Senſory. And conſequently, in whatſoever reſpects the *latter* may be different, in the ſame reſpects, and thoſe only, can the *former* be ſo.

Now the differences to be conſidered in the re-action of the organ can be only theſe: Either, *Firſt*, the *repercuſſion* is *ſtronger* or *weaker*, according as the *pulſe* propagated from the object is ſtronger or weaker: Or, *Secondly*, more or *fewer* parts of the organ do re-act, according as more or fewer in quantity and extent are impreſſed by the object: Or, *Laſtly*, there may be a difference in reſpect of *Poſition* and *Situation*; ſo that ſometimes *theſe*, and ſometimes the *other* parts of the Senſory, are put into this ſtate of re-action, according to the *ſhape* and *figure* of the object which is preſented.

Now let us conſider theſe diſtinctly——

By a more *vigorous* and *forcible* re-action of the ſenſory, I can only have a *ſtronger* and more *lively* ſenſation of an object.

By the re-action of *more parts* of the organ, I can only perceive the object to be *greater or more extended.*

By the re-action of *differently poſited parts* of the organ, I can, (at moſt) only perceive a difference of *ſhape* or *figure* in the object.

But ſuppoſe now there were preſented to me two objects of *two different ſorts* of matter, but exactly *equal* in bulk and *ſimilar* in figure: It is certain, in fact, that I do perceive the one of theſe to be vaſtly different from the other; and yet it is demonſtrable, that the re-actions of the Senſory, produc'd by both of them, muſt be *exactly the ſame* with reſpect both to *poſition* and *extent.*

If, therefore, there be not a difference ariſing from the other cauſe, *viz.* that of the *ſtrength* and *force* of the vibrations, ſuch as is capable of anſwering that apprehenſion I have of theſe two objects, as *ſpecifically* different from one another; then it is demonſtrable that this *Hypotheſis* of *Senſation* is falſe.

Now

Now there can be no difference ariſing from *that other cauſe* capable of doing this; and that for this evident reaſon, *viz.* Becauſe the act of *ſenſation* being, in this *Hypotheſis*, the *Phantaſma*, or re-action of the Senſory; *a more violent re-action can be no more than a more brisk and vigorous perception:* It can but make me perceive the *ſame* object more *ſtrongly* and *forcibly*; but it can never poſſibly make me perceive, that *This* object is really different from *That*; or, that *this is not that*, but ſomething of quite another nature and kind.

And, therefore, ſince it is fact that I do perceive this difference, and that *in the very act of ſenſation itſelf*, while the object ſtrikes the Senſory, and by that means produces my perception of it; it is plain that this *Hobbian* Hypotheſis is infinitely falſe and wrong. *Q. E. D.*

Schol. 1. It is not by any concomitant *act of Ratiocination* that we come to be apprized of the differences of the common objects of ſenſe, but we find them to be different *in and by the pure act of Senſation itſelf.*

We have *in* and *by* this very act ſuch a repreſentation of things made to us, that we apprehend *this* is not *that*, nor *one* the *other*.

It is true, that by *reaſon* and *reflection* we come to a more *compleat* and *particular* knowledge of the agreements and differences of things; but we have not our *firſt* apprehenſions of thoſe agreements and differences from thence. It is not by *reaſon* that I know this *Cube* is *Stone*, and that *Wood*, and the other *Lead*; but it is by *Senſation, or Perception*; whatever it be, that I call ſo: Let that be what it will, I find that I am thereby apprized of the differences of things; and am conſcious alſo, that *this Act* is not of the ſame nature with that which I call by the name of *reaſoning, arguing*, or *collecting one thing from another.*

So

So that there is no *poſſible ſalvo* to be made for this Hypotheſis, by pretending that it is *reaſon*, and not *pure Senſation*, that ought to give us an account of that difference of objects we are ſpeaking of.

And my deſign in adding this *Scholium*, was partly to ſhew, that there is *plain matter of fact in human nature*, to confront thoſe that ſhould pretend to evade the force of the argument this way.

Schol. 2. Our perception of *colours* will ſerve admirably well to illuſtrate this argument. That the rays of light are *originally* tinctured, or (as we call it) coloured, *red*, *yellow*, *green* and *blue*; and that bodies appear of ſuch and ſuch colours to us, accordingly as they do more copiouſly reverberate this or that particular ſort of *coloured light* to our eyes, is now a point that no body calls in queſtion, ſince the noble diſcoveries of the *beſt Philoſopher of the age* relating to this matter have been made publick.

But whatſoever *intrinſick* and *eſſential* difference there be in the beams of light, and how variouſly ſoever they *affect* and *ſtrike* the organ of viſion; yet there can be no poſſible account of our perception of their *different colouredneſs* from the mechaniſm of re-action, nor, indeed, from any other mechaniſm whatſoever. For were the parts of *differently coloured* lights of ever ſo different magnitudes or figures, or reflected from bodies upon the organ with ever ſo different a force; yet all that could be *mechanically* effected from hence would be, that the vibratory re-actions of the Senſory would be *quicker* or *ſlower*, *ſtronger* or *feebler*, performed by *fewer* or *more fibrillæ* in conjunction, or ſomething reducible to the one or the other of theſe. And the utmoſt reſult of all this, with reſpect to the matter of *Senſation*, could be only thus much, *That we ſhould perceive one light more brisk and vivid, or more copious or extenſive than another:* But we could never poſſibly perceive *blue* and *yellow*,

low, or any other diſtinction of what we call *Tincture* and *Colour*, either in the rays of light themſelves, or the bodies that reflect them to us; for this *diſtinction of Tincture* is what, in the nature of things, ſuits no more with *ſwift* and *ſlow*, or *great* and *leſs*, than it does with *ſpace* or *time*, or with *length*, *breadth* and *thickneſs*: And therefore I ſay, that our Perception in this caſe is *a Phenomenon that is infinitely foreign and remote from all re-action or modification of a corporeal organ.* A perception we have; but *what* it is, and *of what*, and *how* produced, we know not: only this we know, that we find a difference as to *ſomething*. And this is but one inſtance of many, relating to plain matter of fact in nature, which I could produce, if it were worth while, to demonſtrate how *impoſſible and abſurd this Hypotheſis of Senſation is.*

But there is enough ſaid of a *blunder:* and all that I have to excuſe my ſaying ſo much upon it is, that I think it is one of the moſt celebrated ones that has appeared upon this ſubject; and that I hope ſomething or other that has been hinted here, may lay a foundation for a confutation of other attempts towards a mechanical ſolution of this ſort of problems.

I ſhall only obſerve further upon this head, *viz.* That if *Senſation* itſelf cannot be the mere *Phantaſma*, or effect of the re-action of the Senſory, that is, its motion *ad extra*; then neither can *memory* be the mere reſult of *an apt diſpoſition of organs, to preſerve or retain the motion impreſſed by external objects*; but muſt neceſſarily be a power far tranſcending all the actions, efforts, or affections of matter, either to cauſe or account for it. Upon what ſcore ſoever, it is impoſſible that we ſhould *perceive* mechanically; upon the ſame, at leaſt, it is impoſſible that we ſhould *remember* by virtue of the ſame principles.

PROP.

PROP. IV.

IF matter be capable of thought and volition, then innumerable properties and affections, relating to the motion and action of bodies, which now paſs for demonſtrated truths, may poſſibly be all of them precarious and falſe.

We demonſtrate in *Mechanicks*, that ſuch and ſuch portions of matter, with ſuch *forces*, or at ſuch *diſtances* from a *fixed point*, ought exactly to balance one another, and remain *in equilibrio*. And in *Hydroſtaticks*, that *Liquids* ought to ſtand at ſuch determinate heights in *Tubes*; or that *ſolid* bodies *immerſed* in them, ought to keep preciſely ſuch or ſuch places and poſitions.

It has been demonſtrated likewiſe, with no leſs evidence than either of the former, that the *larger ſyſtems of matter in the univerſe* obſerve exact order and method in their revolutions; and that, as from certain laws and principles, they ought to deſcribe *Curve-lines of ſuch and ſuch figures and dimenſions, and be liable to ſuch and ſuch particular irregularities*; ſo they do in fact always continue to deſcribe the ſame lines, and preſent us with the *ſame ſet of Phenomena*.

Now if matter be a ſubſtance that can *think* and *will*, then all theſe things which paſs as the ſubjects of common obſervation, and certain demonſtration too, may, notwithſtanding, be altogether doubtful and uncertain, nay abſolutely falſe and wrong. For the *intelligent* and *deſigning* parts of matter may ſhift their *poſitions*, or put themſelves out of thoſe directions, which, by the received laws of motion, they ought to keep in. They may make arbitrary efforts againſt the preſſures and endeavours of neighbouring particles; and by thoſe inteſtine colluctations with each other, prevent or alter the effects that ought to ariſe. They may diſpoſe themſelves to ſtops and pauſes, or to *irregular accelerations and retardations of their motions, going on with degrees of velocity, infinitely diſ-*

proportional

proportional to the forces impreſſed. So that the world may be notoriouſly out in all that relates to the *ponderation*, the *colliſion*, and *reſilition* of bodies, the *impreſſion* and *communication* of motion, the tracks or *ſemitæ* which bodies deſcribe, and the *forces* they move with therein, if matter be endowed with *counſel* and *deſign*. And the plain truth of it is, he that ſees how oddly the parts of matter do in ſome certain caſes diſpoſe of themſelves, how they joſtle and ſqueeze one another, and force themſelves into the way of the *rudeſt ſtrokes* and *heavieſt preſſures*, would be tempted to think their *underſtanding* but little, and their *prudence* leſs.

If any one ſhould argue here, That matter may be a thinking ſubſtance, and yet all the demonſtrated laws of the motion and action of bodies on one another may, notwithſtanding, be infallibly and univerſally true; namely, becauſe God Almighty has appointed and ordained that they ſhould always take place, and has ſet the great machine of the world together in ſuch a manner, that they muſt neceſſarily do ſo:

I anſwer in one word, The plain meaning of that is this: *viz. That GOD has made matter a thinking ſubſtance, and yet diſpoſed things ſo, that all the neceſſary effects of thought and counſel ſhould be for ever impoſſible. He has made it capable of willing and contriving; but to no other purpoſe, nor no other end, than barely to be able to will and contrive, in a ſluggiſh, inactive ſtate, under invincible confinements and reſtraints.* Let thoſe that think to ſolve the argument this way, therefore, conſider how they will reconcile this to *that infinite wiſdom and prudence*, of which they have ſuch plentiful demonſtrations in the whole frame of nature; where, after all their exacteſt and moſt curious enquiries, they will not be able to find the leaſt appearance of any ſuch imprudent ſtep, as *making one thing to thwart and croſs another; or giving powers to any Being, that ſhould be actually fruſtrate and void, by virtue of ſome other general law.*

If

If they can do this, I ſhall eaſily give up the argument as loſt; otherwiſe there is no remedy, but it will and muſt conclude, *That*, in fact, *Matter is not a ſubſtance endowed with thought and counſel.* Q. E. D.

SECT. V.

AND thus we have conſidered what Matter and Motion are able to do towards the production of the *Phenomena* of intelligent ſubſtances, and what ſigns there are in the univerſe of its being a thinking ſubſtance itſelf.

In ſhort, by all *obſervations* and *trials*, Matter does not think; and by *demonſtration*, it cannot think, by virtue of any of the *known properties* of it. Nay, Matter is evidently ſubjected to ſuch laws, as make it impoſſible that it ſhould think, by virtue of any of thoſe properties or affections which are actually diſcover'd to us. So that, I hope, the *firſt article* propoſed may be pretty well cleared: and this, (as I ſaid before) is the main point of all, and that which will give the moſt effectual ſtroke towards the complete determination of the queſtion in hand. I ſhall now, therefore, according to the order of the method propoſed, enquire,

2. *What ſtrength and weight there is in that alledgment, of certain poſſible* unknown *powers or affections of matter, from whence thought and volition may ariſe; though it be allowed that they cannot proceed from thoſe properties and affections which are* known *to us.*

And the plain truth of the matter is, there is nothing but mere ſhuffling and evaſion in it. It is an abſolute downright precarious aſſertion, and ſeems to be calculated purely for a *refuge*, when the former part of the *Hypotheſis* ſhould plainly appear to be no longer defenſible. What an egregious jeſt is it, for a man to reply, and ſay in ſuch a caſe as this, *Matter may have in-*

innumerable properties that we are perfectly ignorant of, and by vertue of thoſe properties it may be able to think? I would fain know what argument there is, that may not be evaded by ſuch a licentious way of *ſuppoſing* as this. A man might make mad work in *Philoſophy*, and advance the moſt monſtrous Paradoxes in the world, under the protection of this method of appealing to the *unknown powers* and *properties* of bodies. If I had a mind to aſſert the oddeſt and moſt ſurprizing things that can be thought of concerning ſome *natural* bodies, provided they were ſuch as did not contradict either *plain ſenſe* or *demonſtration*, I would go this very way to work, arguing from the hidden properties and virtues of Matter, *which might be able to produce ſuch and ſuch effects, tho' all that we knew of Matter could not do it.* And at that rate, all *nature* might be turned into banter; and a man might make any thing of any thing, according to his own fancy: Nor could any *Deiſt*, that ſtands by this Hypotheſis, ever poſſibly anſwer one of thoſe arguments, tho' ever ſo ridiculous.

I make no difficulty of allowing theſe Gentlemen, that it is, indeed, a thing ſimply poſſible in itſelf, that Matter may be endowed with ſome other properties, than are actually known to, or diſcovered by us. For as we do not ſee into the *intrinſick natures* and *eſſences* of things; ſo neither do I know of any *ſtrict* and *perfect demonſtration*, by which the ſimple impoſſibility of this can be made out. But what then? I hope the *bare poſſibility* that it may be ſo, is not, in the nature of things, a warrantable ground for *ſurmiſe* and *ſuſpicion* that it is ſo. Perhaps you will ſay, you do not ſuſpect that it *is actually ſo*, but only that it *may poſſibly be ſo*. But what an idle and uſeleſs ſuſpicion is that? How ridiculous is it for people to amuſe themſelves and others with mere peradventures and ſurmiſes of this, and that, and the other thing, that *may poſſibly be?*

The queſtion is, have you any *hints* or *intimations* from the univerſe, or any thing in it, that Matter has properties quite different from thoſe which we are acquainted with? Do you ſee any thing like a *ſign* or *ſymptom* of it in the nature of things abroad? This, indeed, would give your conjectures ſome tolerable face of reaſon: Whereas to go on gueſſing and ſurmiſing, upon *bare ſimple poſſibility*, and your own *ignorance*, or rather *neſcience*, of what neither concerns you to know, nor, perhaps, is ever poſſible to be known by you, or any other creature beſides; (I mean *the inward eſſences of things*) this is all over *humourſome* and *arbitrary*; nor is there any other account to be given for it, but ſuch a one as will never ſtand good in nature and reaſon, *viz. That you do it, becauſe you will do it.*

But after all, ſuppoſe we allow you your ſuſpicions of ſeveral poſſible *unknown, and quite different properties of Matter, from any that we are now apprized of:* You come on again with a freſh ſuſpicion, *That theſe properties may ſome of them be ſuch, that Matter may be able to think by virtue of them.* Whereas the diſcourſe being of properties, that neither you nor we know any thing of, you can have no more ground to ſuppoſe, that any of all the unknown properties of Matter are ſuch as are *juſt fit for your turn*, namely, to make Matter a thinking ſubſtance, than we can have to ſuppoſe the contray. *Matter may poſſibly be inveſted with ten thouſand properties, different from all that we know of; and yet none of them all may be ſuch, as may render it capable of Thought and Reflection.* But your buſineſs requires you to ſuppoſe ſuch properties and affections in Matter, as are capable of rendring it a *conſcious, thinking ſubſtance*, as you would have it to be; that is, *You will ſuppoſe every thing that is proper to anſwer your own purpoſe, without offering any thing that looks like reaſon or proof for it:* In which you can expect no more credit from the reſt of mankind, than the reſt of mankind believe *you give to yourſelves*, while you offer ſuch wretched

wretched precarious Hypotheſes, as theſe are, to their conſideration.

SECT. VI.

3. AS for the next thing alledged, *viz. That GOD Almighty, by his infinite power, and out of his own good pleaſure, may or does endow ſyſtems of Matter with the faculties of thinking and willing:* It appears to me to be ſo very little to the purpoſe, that I cannot but wonder that any perſons ſhould ever inſiſt on it.

In the firſt place, it is an idle and a vain thing to go to diſputing upon the *poſſible effects* of divine power; and it looks as if men were conſcious to themſelves that they had nothing left to ſay that could ſignify any thing, when they put an argument upon ſuch a foot as this, *That omnipotence may make things to be as they affirm.*

Beſides, this is a *quibbling and ambiguous way of talking*, and, at beſt, ſeems intended only to puzzle the cauſe.

God may endow Matter with a power or faculty of Thinking!

The meaning of which muſt neceſſarily be one of theſe two. Either——

Firſt, *That Matter continuing only what it is, according to our beſt and cleareſt Ideas of it, (viz.* a ſolid ſubſtance, capable of Diviſion, Figure, Motion, and the effects of theſe, and their compoſitions or combinations) *GOD Almighty may, by his infinite power, cauſe Thought and Volition to ariſe or reſult from theſe very properties and affections; or from the nature of Matter, as endowed with theſe properties:* And ſo, in that ſenſe, be ſaid to inveſt it with a power of thinking.

Or, *Secondly*, That the faculty of Thinking and Willing is not any thing reſulting from, or educed out of the mere powers of Matter; *but ſomething of a diſtinct and ſeparate nature, ſuperinduced or ſuperadded to it, by*

GOD: Who in this ſenſe, therefore, makes it a thinking ſubſtance, only as he joins along with it a power of Cogitation, which is quite foreign to Matter, and all its properties.

As for the *firſt* of theſe, I argue thus: It does not at all derogate from infinite power to ſay, *That it cannot make both parts of a contradiction to be true.*

Now Matter continuing to be only what it is, according to our beſt and cleareſt Ideas of it, *viz. A ſolid Subſtance, capable of Figure, Motion, and Diviſion*, with the effects and combinations of theſe: It is impoſſible, by all the laws of the Univerſe, that Matter ſhould *think* and *will*, as we have already demonſtrated.

And therefore, ſince GOD Almighty, as the author of nature, has eſtabliſhed ſuch laws, that by virtue of them, and while they continue in force, it is abſolutely impoſſible that ſuch *Phenomena* as Thought and Volition ſhould reſult from any of the properties and affections of Matter; we may ſafely conclude, whilſt Matter continues to be ſuch as it is, according to our beſt Ideas of it, (that is, endowed with ſuch properties, and ſubject to ſuch laws) that even Almighty power itſelf cannot make it to be a thinking ſubſtance in this firſt ſenſe: *For that would be the ſame thing as to make it a thinking ſubſtance, at the ſame time, and by vertue of the very ſame principles, that it is made impoſſible for it to be a thinking ſubſtance by.*

Secondly, If a thinking power or Faculty, eſſentially diſtinct from all the properties and affections of Matter, or any poſſible effects and compoſitions of them, be ſuperinduced or ſuperadded thereto by GOD; I would ask then, *Why theſe Gentlemen cannot as well allow a* thinking ſubſtance *ſpecifically diſtinct from Matter?*

Where are the odds; but only in the conſequences of this latter conceſſion, with reſpect to a *future State?* And in that reſpect, I confeſs, there are ſome odds. For it is eaſier to conceive how a *thinking ſubſtance* may be liable

liable to pain and puniſhment, than how a mere *Power* or *Faculty* ſhould be ſubject to any ſuch thing. This, a man may fondly tell himſelf, may be loſt, and diſſolve into nothing, he does not know how; whereas the notion of a *real cogitative Subſtance* ſeems to involve a ſort of Stability and Permanency, that gives a much worſe proſpect with reſpect to *hereafter* than the former does.

But notwithſtanding all the abſurdity and unintelligibleneſs of the talk of a power or Faculty, that is not actually the Power or faculty of ſome particular Being or Subſtance, of the ſame ſpecifick nature with that power; yet this very conceſſion of a thinking Capacity or *Faculty*, eſſentially diſtinct from all the properties and affections of Matter, does as effectually thwart and overturn all the ſchemes of a *Materialiſt*, as that of a thinking *Subſtance* would do. For this being granted, it is evident then that there is ſomething in nature (call it *Facultas*, *Vis*, *Potentia*, or by what other name you will) that *is not Matter*, nor does not reſult from any of its properties, nor is not any way allied or related to them: And that this is likewiſe the ſole cauſe of an infinite number of *Actions* and *Operations*; which are, beyond compariſon, more noble and curious than any that we ſee performed by bodies about us. And he that will call this a *power*, and grant nothing of a *ſubſtance* in the caſe, may trifle and play with words if he pleaſes; but all mankind beſides, will plainly ſee it is *but playing with words*. However, I ſay, even upon *this ſuppoſition*, the cauſe of Matter and Motion is entirely at an end; and we muſt hear no more of thoſe *fine Speculations* and *Hypotheſes*, that uſed to be advanced to us upon this ſubject. *Something there is ſpecifically diſtinct from Matter in the Univerſe*; and that being granted, there is enough granted, both to ſpoil all their *Syſtems*, and ſhew that they do but trifle, when they deny the exiſtence of an *Immaterial Subſtance*.

In ſhort, as for this notion of *GOD's endowing ſyſtems of Matter with the powers of Thinking and Willing*, we ſee that it amounts to juſt nothing at all.

Take it *one way*, and it is impoſſible even to infinite power itſelf, while the preſent frame and conſtitution of the world are maintained.

Take it the *other way*, and you do by conſequence give up the whole cauſe. Now in one of theſe two ſenſes it muſt unavoidably be taken; for there is no third ſenſe, nor no poſſible mean betwixt theſe two.

But after all, without laborious arguing upon the buſineſs, ſuppoſe I ſhould ask any one, that told me in the general, *That God did of his own good pleaſure endow Matter with faculties of Thinking and Willing*; I ſay, ſuppoſe I ſhould demand the grounds and reaſons of his aſſertion, and how he would make it out to me that it was ſo, what account would he give me of the matter? Should I have any thing that looked like proof for it? I dare ſay no man would pretend to convince me of it by *acted experiment*; and I am very ſure he cannot give me *demonſtration* for it. And muſt I take the arbitrary fantaſtical gueſſes and ſurmiſes of a perſon (that has a mind Matter ſhould think, and the Goſpel be a cheat) for proof in ſuch a caſe as this? With all the ſame right and reaſon that he tells me, *God has ſuperadded ſuch faculties as theſe to ſyſtems of Matter*; I may tell him, that ſome ſort of Matter can *think*, and not *will*; that another has *inclination*, but no *judgment*; that another has both the former, but no *reflection* nor *remembrance*: That one body has *three*, another *ten*, and another *two hundred* ſeveral modes or ways of *ſenſation*. And who, upon our *Deiſts principles*, could ever diſprove a man that ſhould inſiſt upon ſuch whimſical notions as theſe are? Nor do I think that it would be at all any thing of an immodeſt challenge, to offer to make out any one of them all that ſhould be demanded; when they have given fair and ſatisfactory proof, *that God Almighty*

Almighty has (in any of thoſe ſenſes that we oppoſe) *endowed ſyſtems of Matter with the faculties of Thinking and Willing.*

And thus much may ſuffice for that *third* thing alſo.

SECT. VII.

HAVING now ſhewn that *Matter cannot think*, by virtue of any of thoſe properties and affections which compoſe our Idea of the nature of it; as alſo, that what is alledged about ſome *poſſible unknown properties* of it, by which it may be able to *think* and *will*; and of GOD Almighty's inveſting it with thoſe faculties, by his ſupreme and ſovereign power: That this, I ſay, is nothing but *mere arbitrary Hypotheſis* and *Subterfuge*, and for that reaſon to be allowed no farther place nor conſideration in the argument, than only to be as poſitively denied, as it is precariouſly aſſerted; I ſhall now deduce ſome *Corollaries*, that follow more immediately from the foregoing diſcourſe; and then proceed to make ſome farther application of it another way.

Coroll. 1. *A* thinking *ſubſtance, as ſuch, cannot poſſibly be a* material one.

Coroll. 2. *Unleſs, therefore, there be any* mean *ſort of ſubſtance between* material *and* immaterial, *or ſome that is*, ſpecifically diſtinct *from both*; *it is ſo far from being impoſſible, that there ſhould be ſuch a thing as* immaterial *ſubſtance, that, on the other hand, it is certain to a demonſtration, that there are ſuch ſubſtances*; *and that* Thinking *and* Willing *are neceſſarily the powers of* immaterial, *and* only *of immaterial ſubſtances.*

And becauſe, I believe, no man will pretend to demonſtrate either the *actual exiſtence*, or the *poſſibility* of

a *mean* ſort of ſubſtance between *material* and *immaterial*; that is, between *material* and not *material*, or any that is *ſpecifically* diſtinct from both: Therefore we may put the *Corollary* out of the *Hypothetical* Form, and ſay *abſolutely*, that there are *immaterial* ſubſtances, and that *Thinking and Willing* are neceſſarily the powers of ſuch, and *only* of ſuch ſubſtances.

Coroll. 3. Thinking *Subſtances cannot be liable to the ſame changes and viciſſitudes, that* Material *ones are liable to.*

I enter not at all into the enquiry, *What changes* thinking ſubſtances *may in any reſpect be liable to*; but I ſay, that they cannot be liable to ſuch as *pure material ones* are obnoxious to.

Coroll. 4. *Therefore if a* thinking *ſubſtance be joined to a* ſyſtem *of* Matter; *the diſſolution of the one, is by no means a conſequence of the diſſolution or deſtruction of the other: But the* former *may continue, not only to* exiſt, *but to* act *and* operate, *when the union between* it *and the* latter *ceaſes.*

Coroll. 5. *Brutes are not mere* Automata, *or* Machines.

The reaſon is, *Becauſe their actions plainly ſhew Thought and Deſign:* And one may venture to account, every whit as well, for moſt of the ordinary actions of mankind, by *mere clock-work*; as for ſome actions of theſe creatures, which we call *irrational.*

† *Natural hiſtory* (nay, *common obſervation* and *experience*) will furniſh ſufficient proofs of this. And I dare

† *Ælian.* Var. Hiſt. lib. 1. cap. 2, 3, 4, &c. *and abundance of* Modern Authors *have given very particular and ſurprizing Relations of the* Ingeny, Prudence, *and* ſubtle Contrivance *of divers ſorts of Animals.*

ſay,

ſay, a man that conſults theſe, will find arguments enough in one ſilly animal, to confute all the ſyſtems of the wiſeſt philoſophers, that have written books to prove them to be *mere Machines*.

A noted diſciple of *Des Cartes*, following therein his maſter's ſteps, has taken the pains to do this in a peculiar treatiſe *; but, methinks, there is ſome want of *reaſon* in the book, as well as of *ſenſe* in the *ſubject* it is writ of.

There have been poets †, that have had better notions of theſe creatures, and treated them much more civilly, than ſome of our modern philoſophers have done. And if they do not expreſsly attribute *reaſon* and *underſtanding* to them, (at leaſt ſuch reaſon and underſtanding as man is endowed ‡ with) yet they ſhew plainly enough, that they believed them not to be mere matter, aptly ſet together with ſprings and wheels, and other Inſtruments of motion; but to be really informed by

* Le Grand, *de carentia ſenſus in Brutis.*

† *Eſſe* Apibus *partem* Divinæ Mentis, *& hauſtus*
Ætherios *dixere.* Deum *namque ire per omnes*
Terraſque, Tractuſque Maris, Cœlumque Profundum.
Hinc Pecudes, Armenta, Viros, Genus omne Ferarum,
Quemque ſibi tenues Naſcentem arceſſere Vitas.
Virg. Georg. 4.

So again, ---*Principio Cœlum, & Terras, campoſque liquentes,*
Lucentemque Globum Lunæ, Titaniaque Aſtra
Spiritus *intus alit; totamque infuſa per Artus*
Mens *agitat Molem, & magno ſe corpore miſcet:*
Inde Hominum Pecudumque Genus, vitæque volantum,
Et quæ Marmoreo fert Monſtra ſub æquore Pontus.
Igneus *eſt ollis* Vigor, *& Cæleſtis Origo*
Seminibus.——— Virg. Æn. 6.

‡ ——— *Atqui adeo Venerabile ſoli*
Sortiti Ingenium, divinorumque Capaces,
Atque exercendis, capiendiſque Artibus apti,
Senſum à Cœleſti demiſſum traximus arce,
Cujus egent prona & Terram ſpectantia: Mundi
Principio, indulſit communis Conditor illis
Tantum Animas, *nobis* Animum *quoque*— Juv. Sat. 15.

ſome

ſome principles of celeſtial life and vigour. And I obſerve, by the way, that thoſe people who are ſo fond of making *men*, as well as *brutes*, nothing but meer matter and motion, have the ſenſe of *former* * *ages* againſt them, as well as the reaſon and demonſtrations of the *preſent age*.

Nor do I at all believe, that the reaſon why any of the moſt conſiderable of the old poets or philoſophers talked upon this ſubject of *Human Nature*, in a ſtile ſo very different from that of our modern *Deiſts*, was becauſe they were leſs wiſe and knowing than the latter are; but becauſe, together with (at leaſt) as much knowledge and good ſenſe, they had more liberty of thought, and were not cramped and biaſſed (at leaſt in this affair) by a *ſcheme* or *ſyſtem*, as theſe people are; who, having once ſet up againſt Chriſtianity, muſt go through thick and thin in the way of oppoſing it, nay, even to the very making *men* and *poſts* the ſame ſort of ſubſtances.

However, it is certain they are equally miſtaken, both in the caſe of *men* and *brutes* too.

Even thoſe inferior animals are demonſtrably of quite another ſort of make than they would have them to be.

Thoſe *compariſons* and *reflections* upon things, which it is plain they make, tho' but obſcure and indiſtinct, with reſpect to ours, do yet amount to what we muſt call *reaſon* and *argumentation* in ſome degree.

* *Hipparchus* nunquam ſatis laudatus, ut quo nemo magis approbaverit cognationem cum homine ſyderum, *Animaſque noſtras partem eſſe Cæli.* Plin. lib. 2. cap. 26.

——*Divinæ particulam Auræ.* Horat.

Nam cum cæteras animantes abjeciſſet ad paſtum, ſolum hominem erexit, ad cœlique quaſi cognationis & domicilii priſtini conſpectum, excitavit. *Cic. de Legib. lib.* 1.

Which Lines are (as one may ſay) only put into Verſe by Ovid; *where he ſays,*

Pronique cum ſpectent animalia cætera terram,
Os homini ſublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Juſſit, & erectos ad ſydera tollere vultus. *Met.* 1.

And

And it is as much as ſerves all the uſes and purpoſes of creatures, which hold ſuch a rank in the creation as they do. It is enough to qualify them for all thoſe offices of life, which tend either to their own eaſe and good, or the advantage of mankind who make uſe of them.

Notwithſtanding this, together with ſome ſhare of *mind* or *intelligence*, they have a much larger degree of *appetite* and *inclination*. This is the moſt prevailing * principle in their compoſition, and is by far too ſtrong for the other faculty to govern and reſtrain. Nay, *knowledge* and *perception* in theſe creatures, as to all that appears to us, ſeem to be intended chiefly for *guiding the appetite to its proper objects, and not for tempering and regulating the motions of it.*

The caſe is quite otherwiſe with reſpect to † *man*; who being endowed with a *brighter and vaſtly more capacious intellect*, is thereby qualify'd to make *more exact and ſpeedy reflections* upon things, and to run *conſequences* out to a far greater length: And being able to dictate and preſcribe what ſhould be purſued in a more diſtinct and methodical manner, as alſo to enforce thoſe preſcriptions with a more maſterly authority than the other creatures can, is hence better fitted for the government of his *paſſions* and *appetite*; and does then, and then only, maintain the dignity and juſt prerogative of his nature above the brutes, when he keeps them in due ſubjection to his reaſon. On any occaſion, to give the upper hand to theſe unruly powers, is making a ſtep towards *another ſpecies*; but to be *habitually* given up to the conduct of

* —— *Pecora*, quæ Natura, prona atque *ventri obedientia* finxit. *Saluſt. Bell. Catalin. in princip.*

† Beſtiis autem *ſenſum* & *motum* dedit, & cum quodam *Appetitu*, acceſſum ad res ſalutares, a peſtiferis receſſum; *Homini* hoc amplius, quod addidit *Rationem*, qua regerentur animi appetitus, qui tum remitterentur, tum continerentur. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* 2.

them,

them, is only to be a brute of *finer airs* and *better ſhape* than the common ones are.

SECT VIII.

BUT to proceed a little further in this enquiry: as the operations of brutes are the certain effects and manifeſt ſigns of ſome powers, which are not, nor cannot be the powers of mere matter, nor any thing reſulting from any of its properties and affections; ſo there remains but one or other of theſe two concluſions to be fixed upon, in order to the ſettling of the point about their real nature and conſtitution.

For either they are only pure machines, acted and informed by one common or general ſoul of the world, which *perceives*, and *thinks*, and *deſires* in them, as ſo many diſtinct and ſeparate parcels or ſyſtems of Matter:

Or elſe, together with a ſyſtem of corporeal organs, they conſiſt of a real immaterial ſubſtance, which is individuate and numerically diſtinct for each animal; which immaterial principle or ſubſtance, acting in and by the ſprings and organs of the body, produces all that variety of *Phenomena* which we obſerve in their operations, juſt as that which we call our *Soul* does in ourſelves.

As for the *firſt* of theſe, to ſuppoſe brutes to be in themſelves mere ſenſeleſs machines, acted and invigorated by a common ſoul, that unites itſelf to all organiz'd ſyſtems of matter, and produces variouſly (according to the various diſpoſition and texture of that matter) what we call *Perception*, *Apprehenſion*, *Inclination*, and the like: This is ſuch an intolerably whimſical ſort of Hypotheſis, that it ſcarce deſerves to be argued againſt.

Let him that can *prove* it, produce his arguments for it; nay, let him but give ſome reaſons that may make it only *probable* that it is ſo.

In the mean time I ſhall offer one, that I believe will make it more than *probable* that it is not ſo.

I take

I take it to be a very plain and clear caſe, that we men *are not ſo many particular machines informed by one common* Anima Mundi.

In that we *think* and are *conſcious*, we can be ſure of ſome principle that is not *matter*, which is the alone agent or cauſe of that thought and conſciouſneſs. But then I add,

In that we are not mutually conſcious of each others thoughts and conſciouſneſſes, our particular thought and conſciouſneſs is not, nor cannot be the effect of ſome common intelligent principle, which thinks and is conſcious in us all.

For I would fain know why, or how the *ſuppoſed univerſal Soul*, merely by thinking and acting in one particular Syſtem of Matter, ſhould come to be *not conſcious* of what it thinks and acts in another Syſtem of Matter? It is itſelf, and itſelf only, that thinks here, and there, and every where. This, and that, and the other man's thought and conſciouſneſs, is but the *common Anima* thinking and reflecting upon itſelf within ſo many ſeveral *incloſures or partitions of Matter.*

I grant, indeed, that in this Hypotheſis a man might, with ſome little ſhew of reaſon, attempt to account for ſome differences in the particular *ways and modes of thinking* in particular perſons; *viz.* upon the ſcore of the different diſpoſition, texture, and configuration of the organs, which even the ſame common Soul might be ſuppoſed to influence very variouſly, and thereby produce all the *Phenomena* of ſlowneſs and confuſion, of vivacity, brightneſs, and regularity of thought, in thoſe diſtinct parcels of matter that are informed by it, and are thus variouſly built and framed.

But there is no manner of account to be given, how a *common ſoul*, by informing various Syſtems of Matter, ſhould loſe its *general conſciouſneſs*; or be made *not conſcious* of what it thinks and acts itſelf in each of thoſe Syſtems.

And

And it is not only *unaccountable* how it ſhould be ſo, (for that is not in itſelf any argument againſt the poſſibility or reality of things) but it is *ridiculous* and *abſurd* to all the impartial reaſon in the world, that it ſhould be ſo; and that I take to be a ſufficient argument againſt it.

For the actual *numerical diſtinction* or *diviſion* of thoſe innumerable ſyſtems of matter which the (ſuppoſed) *Anima Mundi* cohabits with, and exerts itſelf in, cannot *part* or *divide* it from itſelf; or, if I may uſe ſuch a phraſe, make any *chaſm* in its eſſence.

It is ſtill the ſame *ſimple undivided* ſubſtance, when thus incorporated with all the animal machines in the univerſe, that it is or would be out of that ſtate of union and cohabitation with matter. Otherwiſe it were no longer *one univerſal ſoul*, but an indefinite aggregate of diſtinct particular ſouls. And for a man to own that, is not only utterly to relinquiſh the preſent Hypotheſis of a *common ſoul*, but likewiſe to grant as much as was at firſt aimed at in the oppoſing of it.

If, therefore, this *general informing principle*, or ſoul of the world, notwithſtanding the actual numerical diſtinction of the ſeveral portions of matter it animates and dwells in, be the ſame ſimple undivided ſubſtance that it would be out of that ſtate of cohabitation with matter: Then, I ſay, *there cannot poſſibly be any interruption of its conſciouſneſs.*

Matter will be no impediment, no bar againſt an univerſal perception and ſenſation throughout all the ſyſtems of it.

That ſame univerſal principle of thought and conſciouſneſs which thinks and is conſcious in this or that particular ſyſtem, will infallibly be conſcious to itſelf in another ſyſtem, that it does actually think and is conſcious in the former.

And therefore we muſt neceſſarily, all of us, be conſcious of each other's conſciouſneſſes and perceptions.

I do not ſay, that we muſt neceſſarily have the very ſame *Modes* or *Kinds* of Thought and Reflection; or that

that one Thinking Being muſt needs be conſcious of the very ſame objects, and after the ſame manner, that another is.

But what I ſpeak of, is an *univerſal ſenſation*, or *a being conſcious of others conſciouſneſſes*, and that upon this ſcore; *That*, according to this Hypotheſis, *there is one ſimple, thinking, conſcious principle, which runs thorow all the Univerſe; and the Conſciouſneſs of any particular, intelligent, Being, is but the Conſciouſneſs of that ſimple principle, reſiding in ſuch or ſuch a ſyſtem of Matter.* And a general perception or conſciouſneſs is, I am ſure, a fair and neceſſary conſequence from thence. But I am ſure, likewiſe, that it is an infinitely falſe one, and contrary to all experience and matter of fact in *human nature.*

And therefore I ſay, that with reſpect to *Mankind*, one may be ſecure enough, that this Hypotheſis of an *Anima Mundi* is a mere dream.

And thoſe philoſophers (if it be not an *abuſe* of the name to call them ſo) who talk at that rate, and pretend to illuſtrate the matter by little vulgar ſimiles, ſuch as that of an *organ*, where the ſame *blaſt* produces a great variety of ſound, by the mere different make of the *Pipes* that receive and emit it, would employ themſelves much better in ſtudying *certain and demonſtrated truths*, than in inventing and amuſing the world with ſuch idle paradoxes.

The different modifications of Matter, if they conſider the thing well, will do them no manner of ſervice here, as I have proſecuted the argument.

For let matter be modify'd or divided how it will, yet ſtill that will have no influence to prevent the general conſciouſneſs of a ſimple ſubſtance, ſpecifically diſtinct from matter, and which at moſt (to talk in theſe Gentlemens dialect) only *tunes* thoſe ſeveral ſyſtems variouſly, according to their different textures and diſpoſitions.

And I would fain know how or why this *tuning of Bodies*, the difference of whoſe *notes* ariſes only from their

their own ſtructure, ſhould hinder the *intelligent principle* which gives the *blaſt* from being every where conſcious of its own *Muſick?*

If they can ſet this point in a clear light, I ſhall be ready to acknowledge the *Anima Mundi* they talk of; and, for the future, look upon myſelf only as one of the pipes of the great organ of the univerſe: which at preſent I confeſs I do not.

Now the uſe that I make of this diſcourſe of an *univerſal ſoul*, with reſpect to *brute animals*, is this:

Since I find their ſtructure to be in the main the ſame with that of *Mankind*; in that, beſides a corporeal Machine, they give plain indications of powers and faculties, which cannot reſult from mere matter, and muſt therefore neceſſarily be the powers of ſome *immaterial ſubſtance*, whatever it be: Moreover, ſince I can, upon very evident principles, conclude, that *men*, a ſuperior order of intelligent creatures, are not inſpired by one *common ſoul*; but, on the other hand, that each of thoſe moſt noble machines is animated by its own proper *ſoul* or *ſpirit*, which is the undoubted principle of all thought and conſciouſneſs in them: I have all the reaſon in the world to conclude, that it is thus with *brutes* likewiſe; and to acknowledge in their compoſition, as well as in that of mankind, *a particular informing ſubſtance, eſſentially diſtinct from, tho' cloſely united to, a ſyſtem of matter.*

And in thus inferring the general nature and conſtitution of theſe creatures from what appears in thoſe of a *higher claſs*, I do no more than what all the *philoſophical people* of the world agree to do in the like caſes; when, from ſome general coincidences and agreements in the conſtitutions and properties of *natural bodies*, they argue them to agree in the reſt, or to be in the main of the ſame nature; tho' they do not, or cannot aſſure themſelves, by *any deciſive experiment*, that it is really ſo. If the reaſoning on one ſide be juſt, it is ſo on the other likewiſe.

Perhaps

Perhaps ſome may think this doctrine liable to difficulties upon the account of its ſeeming tendency, *to infer the ſouls of brutes to be immortal, or to exiſt ſomewhere elſe, when they ceaſe to act and inform their reſpective machines here amongſt us.*

But we ought ever to diſtinguiſh between pure *difficulties*, and manifeſt *abſurdities*; and rather chuſe that ſide which is attended with the *former*, than adhere to that which is unavoidably preſſed with the *latter*.

To ſolve the actions of brutes by any *laws of Mechaniſm*, or without a *cogitative* (and in ſome degree *rational*) ſubſtance, is plainly impoſſible. And he that attempts it, goes about the ſame abſurd and ſenſeleſs work, as that man does, who at once pretends to explain all the Phenomena of *Thought*, by Matter and Motion.

Whatever notion, therefore, I adhere to concerning *theſe creatures*, I am ſure I am not to adhere to this; becauſe *Experience*, *Reaſon* and *Philoſophy*, do all with one accord remonſtrate the contrary.

On the other hand, I make no ſcruple to own, *That as I know not all the ends and purpoſes for which brutes are made, nor all the uſes which the all-wiſe and powerful creator makes of them in the great ſyſtem of nature; ſo neither do I know how he diſpoſes of them, when they ceaſe to live and do us ſervice in this lower world.*

Thoſe that ſay, *they do not exiſt, or do not retain their individuation*; can no more prove what they affirm, than thoſe can who aſſert the contrary.

So likewiſe thoſe, who would ſuppoſe them *to paſs ſucceſſively into other bodies, and make various revolutions and circulations through the univerſe*; have, as far as I can find, no more ſolid grounds for what they ſuppoſe, than thoſe who believe no ſuch tranſmigrations; *But leave them all in ſome ſort of ſtate, wherein they may more effectually anſwer the ends of their creator's glory, and the general perfection of the univerſe, than in their preſent baſe and ſervile condition they are capable of doing.*

As to theſe points, I ſay, we are all in the dark; only one thing we can be ſure of, *viz. That they are not mere Machines*; and another we may be as good as ſure of, *viz. That they are not acted by a common Soul.*

SECT. VIII.

AT *Coroll.* 4. foregoing, we have inferred, *the undoubted poſſibility of the ſeparate exiſtence and operation of Thinking Subſtances, after the diſſolution of thoſe Syſtems of Matter, which they once informed, and were united to.*

And, indeed, if *thinking* ſubſtance be, in the *nature of things*, intrinſecally and eſſentially different from *material* ſubſtance; and, conſequently, *not liable to be effected with thoſe changes and viciſſitudes which material ſubſtance is liable to:* Then it is not only *poſſible*, but it is alſo very *probable* and *likely*, that the *one* may continue both to *be* and to *act*, when the *other* is no longer a ſuitable companion, or rather a proper *Organ* or *Habitation* for it.

For as none of all the irregularities or indiſpoſitions, *a Syſtem of Matter* can be obnoxious to, or even its crumbling into duſt and atoms, can ever have any direct and proper influence upon a ſubſtance of ſo very different a nature and properties as a *thinking* one is, ſo as either to deprive it of its powers of thinking and willing, or to render it uncapable of an actual exerciſe of thoſe powers: So there is not the leaſt ſhadow or appearance of reaſon to ſuſpect, *that the author of Nature has any way tied the being or activity of Thinking Subſtance*, to the being, or regular ſtate and condition of *Matter*; ſo that the former ſhould depend upon the latter, and without it ſhould entirely ceaſe.

And

And if there be neither any *phyſical* connection or dependance of one of theſe upon the other as to operation or exiſtence, nor any that is of *divine poſitive Ordination*, as we have no manner of grounds to believe there is; then, I think, the leaſt that can be ſaid is this, *viz. That it is much more than probable, that a thinking ſubſtance ſhould exiſt, and retain all its powers and faculties, when a Syſtem of Matter which it was once lodged in ceaſes to be in a conditition fit for it to exert and diſplay itſelf in, as it had done before.*

And the truth of it is, the aſſurance we may have of this is the neareſt a-kin to ſtrict *certainty* of almoſt any that I know.

Nay, thus far we have abſolutely *poſitive certainty* in the caſe, *viz. That it muſt be ſo, for any influence*, Matter, or any of its laws, *can have to the contrary.*

As for the reſt, *it depends entirely on the ſovereign Will and Pleaſure of Almighty GOD.* He, indeed, is able in point of *power*, and may, in point of *right* and *juſtice*, do with us whatſoever he pleaſes.

But the queſtion is, What reaſon there is to expect the deſtruction of a thinking ſubſtance from *his Will?* Without ſome diſcoveries of this, it is mere humour and whimſy to pretend to believe or ſurmiſe it. We ſhould reckon it infinitely vain and fooliſh, *to argue a thouſand ſtrange events in the world of nature from GOD's abſolute power, without any reaſons to believe that it was his will to do ſo and ſo.*

And is it not as vain to do it in this caſe?

What more reaſon have I to believe, that GOD will deſtroy a thinking ſubſtance, or deprive it of its powers of thinking and willing, when it ceaſes to inform a diminutive Syſtem of Matter here; than to believe, *that he will invert the wiſe eſtabliſhed order of the Univerſe, or deprive a vaſt number of bodies of all their beneficial Properties and Qualities, and render them mere uſeleſs and unprofitable lumps in the Creation, to the unbin-*

ging of all the other parts of nature that depend upon their influence?

No man can *demonſtrate* that he will not do ſo; and yet no man, I preſume, believes he will, or troubles himſelf ſo far as to queſtion whether he will or no.

We ſit ſecure and eaſy as to all events of this kind, becauſe we can find no manner of ground or reaſon to perſuade ourſelves that things will be ſo; but, on the other hand, have many good reaſons to aſſure ourſelves that they will not.

And tho' our reaſonings in this caſe do not amount to *ſtrict* and *abſolute certainty*; yet we are under no more apprehenſions, than if we had certain and demonſtrative knowledge how things would go in the world of nature as long as nature laſts.

And, I ſay, we have all the ſame ſecurity *with reſpect to GOD Almighty, as to the continuation of the beings and powers of Thinking Subſtances:* And this added to the poſitive certainty we have of their not being affected by any changes, viciſſitudes, or diſſolutions of Matter, *We have an aſſurance, which is* only not *equal to a ſtrict and abſolute certainty of their future exiſtence and operation.*

Thus far the argument runs upon principles of *pure natural reaſon.*

The *Goſpel-Revelation*, indeed, fully decides the queſtion, and ſets the matter beyond all diſpute. But I am concerned with thoſe, who will hear no arguments of that kind; tho' with how much reaſon it is that they refuſe them, I hope I have ſufficiently ſhewn in the foregoing treatiſe.

SECT. XI.

THERE is another ſort of people, who, with reſpect to the matter of the preſent argument, are a ſort of *Trimmers* between *Chriſtians* and *Deiſts*; as not wholly disbelieving a reſurrection and a future ſtate, with the

the *latter*; nor yet allowing ſouls to be either happy or miſerable upon the diſſolution of the body, with the *former*. Theſe perſons will have it, that the ſoul falls into a *deep ſleep at death*, or remains in a ſtill, inactive ſort of ſtate till the reſurrection; and then they tell us, it ſhall awake out of that ſleep, and be again united to a body, and enter upon a ſtate of bliſs or puniſhment, according to its demerits.

I will not call this *Hypotheſis* a mixture of *Chriſtianity* and *Scepticiſm*; but methinks it is ſuch an ambiguous one, that a man ſcarce knows which way to attack it. Here you have the *Elyſian* field and *Lethe*; the joys of a future life ſet before you, at the end of a long night of ſilence and forgetfulneſs. And, indeed, if one could be ſure the *Hypotheſis* were true, the next queſtion would be, whether it might not be ſuppoſed, that ſome of thoſe people were got into their midnight dreams, or at leaſt began to *nod* before-hand.

It is no ſtrange thing at all, to find even wiſe and great men of old, who were ſtrangers to the *Goſpel-diſcoveries*, at a loſs what reſolutions to come to with reſpect to a future ſtate. To find ſome of them, either wholly denying *, or elſe ſpeaking in the moſt doubtful and timorous manner of the exiſtence of ſouls after death; others *queſtioning*, whether there will be any ſenſation of † good or

* Φιλοσόφατον ὁ θάνατος. πίσης γὰρ, ἢ ἔστιν ἔτι τοῖς τετελευτηκόσι δηλῶσαι ἔτι ἀγαθόν ἐστι καὶ κακόν.

Ariſtot. Lib. 3. de Morib. Cap. 9. *And ſo again to the ſame purpoſe*, Lib. 1. Cap. 11.

Lucan. Lib. 3. *Aut nihil eſt ſenſus animis à morte relictum,*
Aut mors ipſa nihil. ———

Marc. Antonin. Imper. lib. 3. ſect. 3. Edit. *Cantab.* 1652. Ἐκλιπεῖν μὲν ἐκ τοῦ βίου, εἰ δεῖν θεῶν κακόν, οὐδὲ ἔχει· εἰ δὲ οὐ, ἀναιδυομένου, πάσης πόνων καὶ ἡδονῶν ἀνεχόμενος. lib. 7. ſect. 32. Περὶ θανάτου, &c. ἵνα σβέσῃς, ἢ μεταίσῃς. *Et alibi paſſim.*

† *Senec.* Epiſt. 63. Pag. 491. Edit. *Antwerp.* 1632. *Fortaſſe, ſi modo ſapientum vera Fama eſt, recipitque nos* locus alius; *quem putamus periiſſe, præmiſſus eſt.* And much to the ſame purpoſe again, in Epiſt. 24. *Mors nos aut conſumit, aut emittit: Emiſſis meliora reſtant, onere detracto. Conſumptis nihil reſtat; bona pariter malaque ſubmota ſunt.* pag. 430.

evil; and others, allowing Souls to continue for a season *, but yet to be *mortal*, tho' at the same time confessed to be but parts of the *immortal Soul of the Universe*. (And yet after all it must be confessed, there are some †, who have expressly asserted the immortality and future operations of separated Souls.)

But whatever the opinions of any of those writers were, whether right or wrong, to hear men (who pretend some regard to a Revelation, in which *Life* and *Immortality* are so clearly brought to light) arguing for such a sort of scheme as this, does, I confess appear to me to be very odd and strange. However, to make short of this Matter, I shall lay down the following conclusions.

First of all, *That this doctrine of the Soul's sleeping at death, is certainly contrary to the plain and express discoveries of the* New Testament: *And therefore, that if that book be a divine Revelation, the said doctrine is undoubtedly false; and consequently, those who believe it, do, whatever they pretend, in reality either not believe the divine authority of the* New Testament, *or else are not well apprized (either through ignorance, inconsiderateness, or inveterate prejudices) of the weight and force of those proofs, by which the contrary doctrine is there established.*

This point will be effectually made out by evincing the truth of this proposition; which might be easily and abundantly done from various texts of Scripture, *viz. That the writers of the* New Testament *do in their reasonings so far suppose and take for granted, not only the bare* existence, *but also the* activity *and* universal operation of separate Souls, before their re-union to their

* Τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ἀϊδιοτικήν, ταύτην δὲ εἶναι τὸ συμφυὲς ἡμῖν πνεῦμα, διὰ τὸ καὶ σῶμα εἶναι, καὶ μετὰ θάνατον ἐπιμένειν, φθάρτον δὲ ὑπάρχειν. τὴν δὲ τῶν ὅλων ἄφθαρτον. ἧς μέρη εἶναι τὰς ἐν τοῖς ζώοις. Diog. Laert. in Zenon. Lib. 7. pag. 201. Edit. *Lond.* 1664.

† *Sallust. Philos.* Cap. 8, 21. Lib. περὶ θεῶν καὶ κόσμου.

respective

reſpective bodies at the reſurrection; *that without this, there is neither any force or conſequence in their arguments, nor any good ſenſe to be made of what they ſay.*

I ſhall not ſtand either to repeat and tranſcribe, or to make long arguments here, upon thoſe texts of ſacred writ which ſerve to clear up this point. It is enough for my purpoſe juſt to hint, and make ſome ſhort application of a few of them: as remembring, and deſiring theſe people to remember too, that one ſingle evident text is enough to decide the controverſy.

How, therefore, in the firſt place, could St. *Paul* ſay, (upon the *Hypotheſis* of *ſleeping*, or lying in a lethargick unactive ſtate till the reſurrection) that *for him to die, would be gain?* Let it be conſidered:

That the period of time between his death and the reſurrection was a *fixed* and *ſettled* period, tho' the duration or length of it was ever ſo much unknown to him.

That the more time he got from the *general ſleep*, to ſerve in the great work of the goſpel here; the more opportunities and advantages he had for encreaſing his reward, and adding to his crown of glory hereafter.

That he had our Saviour's preſence, and the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, in all his work and labours, and that in a very eminent and high degree.

Laſtly, That tho' he knew perfectly well all the defectibility, and all the actual defects and imperfections of human nature, and even of GOD's grace as implanted therein, as likewiſe all the dangers and temptations he was liable to; yet it is plain, by all the tenour of his writings, that he had a firm and ſettled perſuaſion that he ſhould triumph over all at laſt, and obtain the bleſſed end of his faith and hope.

Now if this be ſo; I would fain know, how could it be *gain*; or rather, how could it be otherwiſe than *loſs* to him to die; ſince dying was ſinking into a ſtate of utter *inſenſibility* and *incapacity* either of doing

or enjoying here in the preſent world, or making any ſteps towards heightning his felicity in the world to come? It is evident, that if I muſt be debarred of the enjoyment of an happineſs for ſuch a term of years, be it what it will, and in the mean time have *two* ſeveral ſtates or conditions before me; *one* wherein I can beſtir and exert my ſelf, and, together with taſting many refreſhing comforts, contribute to the encreaſe of my future fortune and advantages; and *another*, wherein I muſt lie wrapt up in profound ſleep and ſilence: It is evident, I ſay, that the more time I get to ſtay in the former of thoſe conditions, the more I advance and get ground upon the grand period of ſleep and inactivity; and am, therefore, in reality, ſo much the more a *gainer*.

And yet the apoſtle ſays expreſsly, that for him to *die*, that is to go away, even from ſuch a ſtate and ſuch circumſtances, would be *gain*. For which reaſon, I conclude, he had no notions at all of a *long ſleep* in this literal ſenſe.

The only anſwer that I am apprehenſive of here, is this, *viz. That while the apoſtle was in the world, he was under a poſſibility of falling away from GOD's grace, and ſo of loſing all; whereas, by dying, tho' he neither acted nor enjoyed any thing, yet he was ſecure from the very poſſibility of a defection.*

But I am apt to believe, this reply involves and ſuppoſes ſomething, which no perſon, if it were put upon him, could ever fairly make out. We know nothing of the degrees of poſſibility or impoſſibility, with reſpect to any ſtate of vertue or goodneſs whatſoever. It is foundation enough for me, to ſhew the invalidity of this reply upon, *That ſuch ſupplies of divine grace and ſtrength may go along with good men in their work here in the world, as may effectually correct and prevent all the ill effects of thoſe principles in them that naturally tend to a defection, notwithſtanding all the allowed poſſibility of the*

thing

doing itſelf: And I hope there is nothing that either reliſhes of *fatality*, or tends any way to the prejudice of *human liberty*, in ſuch an aſſertion as this.

And therefore, notwithſtanding that ſuch an event as a defection was ſimply poſſible in the nature of things; yet the Apoſtle all along in his writings evidently expreſſing a moſt chearful dependance on, and firm expectation of the ſtrengthning and preſerving grace of God, to the period of all his labours here; and being to quit ſuch very advantageous circumſtances, as thoſe of the goſpel-ſervice, and the enjoyment of divine comforts, for an inſenſible, lethargick ſtate; which, how ſhort ſoever it might ſeem to have been at the morning of the reſurrection, was yet, notwithſtanding, really and intrinſically a loſs or deprivation of ſo much poſſitive good which might have been enjoy'd in the mean time: I take it to be very clear, laying all theſe circumſtances together, that the apoſtle would never have called death a *gain* to him, if he had had any notions of ſuch a conſequence of it, as what the preſent *Hypotheſis* ſuppoſes.

I will only ask farther;

Is to *depart* and *to be with Chriſt*, to enter into a profound ſleep?

Or is *being preſent with the LORD*, which the ſame apoſtle makes an immediate conſequence of *being abſent from the body*; the ſame thing as lying ſtill, and being deprived of all knowledge, reflection and ſenſation? I do not propoſe to accumulate texts of ſcripture here; and I am fully ſatisfy'd that theſe are ſo expreſs and full to the purpoſe, that, after a thouſand quibbles and evaſions, it will remain unqueſtionable, that the contrary doctrine ſtands clearly revealed in the *New Teſtament*.

SECT. X.

BUT, *Secondly*, Abſtracting from all that the *goſpel* has diſcover'd in reference to the matter; I ſay,

That

That this notion of a Soul's entring into a deep ſleep, *is in itſelf groundleſs, and unſupported by any thing of ſolid reaſon and proof.*

For, *1ſt*, That *thinking* ſubſtance is eſſentially and ſpecifically diſtinct from all *matter*, is evident to a demonſtration: And therefore the ſole riſe and ſpring of all the action and operation of ſuch ſubſtance, *quatenus thinking*, being ſolely and purely *its own formal nature* and *powers*, (*Matter*, which is an infinitely heterogeneal ſubſtance, neither contributing nor concurring any way as an *efficient* to the production of any action of thought and volition as ſuch) it is an unavoidable concluſion; *That the diſunion of a thinking ſubſtance from a portion or ſyſtem of matter, cannot poſſibly influence or cauſe, that that cogitative ſubſtance ſhould ceaſe to exert any act of intellection, or volition, which it even was capable of exerting, in its ſtate of union to that matter.* Indeed (as was hinted before) the *Author of Nature* may, if he pleaſes, make a thinking ſubſtance to be no longer a thinking, volitive, or active ſubſtance, or any ſubſtance at all; but either annihilate, or reduce it to a ſenſeleſs torpid ſtate, by withholding that vital influx which is derived from himſelf, and is the life and ſoul of all creatures whatſoever: And this he may do now, or at any time, while our ſouls are houſed in groſs matter; and that every whit as well as at death, when they are ſeparated from it. But to talk of any thing of this kind, as the effect or reſult of the loſs of a ſyſtem of groſs matter; or to ſuggeſt as if *the operations of Thinking Subſtance, without bodily organs, were doubtful and queſtionable if poſſible to be at all*, is ſuch *idle unphiloſophical cant*, that it is not to be accounted for, but by an extreme ignorance, or an extreme fondneſs for an *Hypotheſis* that pleaſes, tho' at the ſame time it be demonſtrably falſe. It were a much more pardonable blunder, if a man ſhould tell me, *That the ſpring of a watch, taken out of its relation to a ſyſtem of little wheels*, which are placed in a certain order and poſition one to another;

that

that this, I ſay, *would utterly loſe its elaſtick force*; *and, tho' ever ſo much bent and compreſſed, yet would not reſtore itſelf, becauſe it had not the former little Machines to exert itſelf upon, and impart motion to.* For tho' this be evidently falſe, and I know that the ſpring will ſtill retain its property of reſtoring itſelf, whether it be put to, or taken from a ſyſtem of wheels; becauſe this property reſults from its own native temper and form, and not from any relation that it bears to that ſyſtem, or from the influence and agency of any of the parts of it: Yet, however, it is demonſtrably more irrational and abſurd to tell me, *That a ſoul muſt ſink into a ſtate of inactivity, for want of a ſyſtem of organs it uſed to exert itſelf by*; becauſe I am certain, not only that the actions of intellection and volition, as ſuch, do not ariſe from any relation to, or any influence or agency of matter; but alſo, that the very ſubſtance itſelf, which thinks and wills, is eſſentially and ſpecifically diſtinct from matter, and therefore infinitely leſs obnoxious to any change of property, or ceſſation of the action of any eſſential power, upon its ſeparation from a ſyſtem of groſs material organs; than the machine juſt now mentioned (which is of the ſame ſubſtance and ſpecifick nature with every part it moves) is to loſe its *temper*, when it no longer performs the office of a *ſpring*, in the ſyſtem it once gave motion to. If the one of theſe would be ſuch a paradox in *Phyſicks*, that I ſhould conclude the man who propoſed it to me, had no other end in view, than only to try whether I were awake, or how credulous I was: the other, I am ſure, is ſuch a ſtrange piece of *Metaphyſicks*, and implies ſuch wrong notions both of the *nature of matter* and *thinking ſubſtance*, that it is a wonder how men ſhould venture upon ſuch bold ſurmiſes and conjectures, in a caſe where the nature of things is plainly againſt them, and all their reaſonings about it are founded upon a mere blunder.

2*dly*, Suppoſe I granted theſe people, that a *ſyſtem of matter was abſolutely neceſſary, in order to the operation and per-*

perception of a thinking ſubſtance; yet there were no manner of neceſſity or occaſion for running upon this *Hypotheſis* of the *ſoul's ſleeping at death:* So far from that, that I ſay, there may be not only a far better account given of the future ſtate of ſouls, than what this *Hypotheſis* can pretend to give; but alſo one that will not be liable to any objections either from *revelation* or *philoſophy*. For pray, where is the harm or abſurdity of ſuch a concluſion as this? *viz. That when thoſe groſſer and more terreſtrial machines, we call our bodies, by and through which our ſouls exert themſelves in this world, and converſe with the various objects of it: When theſe*, I ſay, *are depoſited at death, that then they are cloathed upon with other ſyſtems of matter; which tho' very different from theſe, are yet in all reſpects adapted and accommodated to the regions they are placed in, and to their ſtate and circumſtances therein*; even as the frame and texture of our preſent bodies is exactly fitted to the nature, uſes, and requirements of the world we here inhabit. I am ſure there is no *hereſy* nor *falſe philoſophy* in this; there is nothing little or unworthy of GOD, nor nothing improbable or unlikely to be, conſidering the various ſucceſſions of change and improvement in all the works of GOD throughout the frame of nature. And the truth of it is, I can ſcarce defend myſelf from believing, that there is no *thinking ſubſtance*, except the infinite Being alone, but what is incorporated with ſome ſyſtem of matter; and that it is his, and only his prerogative and perfection to be abſolutely exempt therefrom, and to be in *that Senſe*, as well as others, *a pure ſimple eſſence.*

So that, I ſay, the Aſſertors of the *Hypotheſis* we are ſpeaking of, might, without involving themſelves in any difficulties of moment, have kept to the point of *the ſoul's not acting without matter*, and at the ſame time avoided ſuch inconveniences, as now they will never be able to free themſelves from.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

I Shall leave this head, after I have made one ſhort remark more relating to it; *viz. That there is nothing at all to be inferred with reſpect to the future ſleep, or inſenſible unactive ſtate of the ſoul upon its ſeparation from this body; nothing of this*, I ſay, *to be concluded from thoſe common inſtances of people that lie in ſwoons and apoplexies, and ſuch like diſtempers; which, to all appearance, deprive them of all ſenſe and knowledge of external objects, and ſeem to intimate as if the very ſoul itſelf were become lethargick, and the intellectual powers quite ſunk and loſt.* I know very well, theſe ſort of examples are ſometimes urged and made uſe of this way; but, I muſt needs ſay, as precariouſly as all the reſt of the ſcheme, and to as little purpoſe. All that can be inferred with any truth and juſtice from ſuch inſtances is this, *viz. That while the Thinking Subſtance we call our ſoul continues here, at the will and pleaſure of GOD, to animate a machine compounded of ſuch a vaſt variety of parts and organs as our body is; it is neceſſary that all the parts of the frame ſhould be regularly diſpoſed, ſo as to be capable of diſcharging their ſeveral functions, according to their proper end and deſign, in ſuch a machine, in order to the ſoul's exerting itſelf as an intellectual or Thinking Subſtance*, by, and through ſuch a contexture of organs: *And that when any of thoſe parts of the ſyſtem, which are of the moſt immediate uſe for this end, are ſo far vitiated and depraved, or clogged and encumbred, that they are no longer capable of doing the offices they were intended for; then thoſe operations of the ſoul, which by the laws of its preſent union and cohabitation with Matter, ought to be performed through the miniſtration of ſuch and ſuch organs, ceaſe to be performed after that mode or manner: And that we do not underſtand human nature well enough, to find out in what manner it is that they are performed, during that confuſed and irregular ſtate of things in the machine.* This

is all that any man, who propoſes to obſerve any thing of rule and reaſon in his concluſions, can infer from the caſes of *apoplectick*, or other like affected perſons. I ſay it will certainly follow, that that ſubſtance which perceives and thinks, cannot in ſuch a caſe make uſe of the vitiated organs of the body, in acts of thought and perception, ſo modify'd, as when all was in good order. But that it ſinks into a ſlumber, or becomes uncapable of all action as a *thinking ſubſtance*, becauſe it wants an *apparatus* of well-diſpoſed organs, is ſo far from being any thing of a juſt conſequence, that it is a very irregular and wrong one.

SECT. XII.

THAT ſome neceſſary, ſelf-exiſtent, independent, and infinitely perfect BEING, muſt have been from all ETERNITY, is a truth that every man may be as ſure of, as he can be of his own exiſtence.

That the ſame Being is likewiſe infinitely intelligent, prudent, ſagacious and thoughtful, is not only as inevitably neceſſary a conſequence as either of the former; but likewiſe a thing as palpably evident in its *effects*, as any thing can poſſibly be.

Now from hence let us conſider what will follow farther.

If it be true in general, that *thinking ſubſtance* is, and muſt be eſſentially and ſpecifically diſtinct from *matter* —

If the *Divine Being* be infinitely and eſſentially intelligent——

If *Abſolute Simplicity* be a neceſſary attribute of an infinitely compleat and perfect Being——

If to conſiſt or be made up of two ſubſtances, eſſentially and ſpecifically different from one another, be demonſtrably inconſiſtent with Abſolute Simplicity——

Then *Matter* cannot poſſibly be any *attribute* of the *Divine Being*, or any thing of, or belonging to the *Divine Eſſence*, as ſuch——

Nor

Nor can it poſſibly be true, That GOD is the Τὰ Πάν, or the *Univerſe*——

Or, That there cannot be *any other ſubſtance*, but GOD——

Or, That what we vulgarly ſtile *creatures*, or *particular, finite beings*, are only *parts*, *appendages*, *modes*, or *modifications* of the *divine ſubſtance*. ——

Or, That one ſubſtance cannot *create* or *produce* another——

Or, That one ſubſtance is *neceſſarily infinite*, and does *neceſſarily exiſt*——

With a vaſt number of other ſuch like conſequences.

Theſe, I ſay, can none of them all be true, if the foregoing argument be true, and its parts firmly knit together.

And let thoſe people, who make any of theſe *concluſions* articles of their faith, find out where the defect of it lies. If they will let the whole diſpute turn upon the Buſineſs of *matter and motion's thinking*, or of *thinking ſubſtance not being eſſentially and ſpecifically different from matter*, I declare I am moſt heartily willing to leave it there; and believe theſe Gentlemen cannot do more prudently, than to let the ſtreſs of the matter lie upon that Head. If they do not fix upon that article, then what they have to do will be either to deny——

That the *Divine Being* is an *intelligent one*——

Or, That *Abſolute Simplicity* is a neceſſary perfection of his nature——

Or elſe to affim——

That it is not inconſiſtent with *Abſolute Simplicity*, to be made up of two ſubſtances, eſſentially and ſpecifically diſtinct from one another: Nay, to be an immenſe, or infinite aggregate, of an infinitely infinite number of numerically diſtinct Subſtances, under each of the two different ſpecies.

It is equal to me, whether they inſiſt upon either of theſe *three* points, or elſe put the iſſue of the whole cauſe upon the eſſential diſtinction of *thinking* and *material*

terial ſubſtance; provided they do but let it reſt ſomewhere, and will be ſure to keep to the point when they have done.

I ſhall only add further, That this monſtrous ſyſtem of GOD's being the Τὸ Πᾶν, or the *Complexion of the whole univerſe*, how much ſoever illuſtrated and improved by *Spinoſa* and his followers, is but a piece of *antique philoſophy* revived. I do not ſay, that any opinions are the worſe for being *old* ones; but allow, that in ſome reſpects they may on that account deſerve more credit: But what I ſay is, that the world has only been amuſed with an exploded figment of ſome particular philoſophers in former ages, ſomewhat cultivated, and put into modern dreſs, inſtead of wonderful diſcovery, and demonſtrable truth.

Juſt as ſome of our other late writers, in ſome particular doctrines relating to the *ſoul*, have only preſented the world with another edition of the *Epicurean* or *Lucretian* ſyſtem. It is well known, that there were people in former days, whoſe ſtile was very near a-kin to that of *Spinoſa*, upon the ſubject we are talking of. They made us all to be meer * *parts* and *members* of GOD; not

* *The human ſoul is ſtiled by* Epictetus, Διὸς μέρος. Diſſert. lib. 1. cap. 1.

Plutarch *explains this yet more particularly*: Ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ νοῦ μετέχουσα καὶ λογισμοῦ, οὐκ ἔργον ἐστὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέρος· οὐδ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γέγονεν. Quæſt. Platonic. lib. 1. pag. 1001. Edit. *Par.* 1624.

Marcus Antonius Imp. *is evidently of the ſame mind*——Ὁ δαίμων ὃν ἑκάστῳ προστάτην καὶ ἡγεμόνα ὁ Ζεὺς ἔδωκεν, ἀπόσπασμα ἑαυτοῦ, οὗτος δὲ ἐστὶν, ὁ ἑκάστου νοῦς καὶ Λόγος. Lib. 5. Sect. 27. Edit. *Cantab.* 1652.

Id. lib. 12. ſect. 26. ——Ὁ ἑκάστου Νοῦς, καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐῤῥύηκε.

Seneca *is as expreſs as any of them all*: Nemo improbe eo conatur aſcendere, unde deſcenderat. Quid autem eſt, cur non exiſtimes, in eo Divini aliquid exiſtere, qui *Dei pars eſt? Totum hoc, in quo continemur, & Unum eſt, & Deus*; & Socii ejus ſumus, & Membra. Epiſt. 92. pag. 587.

And

not only to be *from* him, and *of* him, which is true in one ſenſe; but alſo to be *of his very being and ſubſtance.*

And it was not a remote ſtep from hence to the eſſential *unity* and *identity* of all ſubſtance, or the *improducibility* of one ſubſtance by another. For tho' theſe principles may ſeem more naturally to infer the former doctrine of *being parts of GOD*, than to be themſelves inferred from it; yet it is not uncommon for men to make fundamental propoſitions from certain concluſions hinted to them; and ſo by improving and running a notion up higher, to make the appearance of an entire new ſcheme.

As for *this ſyſtem*, it is not only the *chriſtian religion*, but *all religion* in general, that is at one ſtroke overturned by it. If there be no diſtinction of *being* in the *univerſe*; if all and every thing be *GOD*, and we are only *parts* or *modifications* of his ſubſtance; then what abſolute nonſenſe is all the talk of *virtue* and *vice*, of *good* and *evil*, of *religion* and *impiety*, of *rewards* and *puniſhments?* What poſſible meaning can ſuch terms have, or what room can there be for the uſe of them in ſuch an *Hypotheſis* as this? Are ſome modifications of the divine being *good*, and others *hateful* and *evil?* Is *this particle* of him a *ſaint*, and the *other* a *ſinner?* Can

And Cicero *to the ſame purpoſe*, De Nat. Deor. lib. 1.

But, methinks, thoſe celebrated lines of Aratus *expreſs a much better notion of the* Deity, *than any we find in the forecited paſſages. At the ſame time that he excellently ſhews the* Omnipreſence and Immenſity of the Divine Being, *he eſtabliſhes a juſt notion of our* dependance upon, *and* derivation from him, *without making us* parts of his Eſſence.

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδέποτ' ἄνδρες ἐῶμεν
Ἄῤῥητον· μεσταὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαὶ
Πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραὶ, μεστὴ δὲ θάλασσα
Καὶ λιμένες πάντη δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες·
Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ ΓΕ'ΝΟΣ 'ΕΣΜΕ'Ν. Arat. *Phænom.*

the diſtinction of happineſs and * miſery be in his *one* ſubſtance? Does GOD preſcribe laws, and give revelations of his own will, to himſelf? Or is he worſhipped, and adored, and ſerved by himſelf? How can there be any ſuch thing as *Violence* and *Injuſtice* in the world? Can one ſpark of the divinity be injurious to another? What ſcope is there for complaint, accuſation, revenge, or puniſhment? Is there war and confuſion in GOD? How is it poſſible there ſhould be any thing elſe but order, regularity, and perfect decorous management amongſt the *parts* of that being; who, if he be at all, muſt be all good and perfect? And if there can be nothing elſe but what is ſo; why then does *one part* correct, chaſtiſe, or lord it over *another?* If no real faults and diſorders; why is there ſmart and pain? If there be; what then is that *Being*, which is made up of ſuch very irregular members?

In ſhort, there is no poſſible room, I will not ſay only for any ſort of *religion*, but not for any acts of what we commonly call *morality*, *government*, or *law*, amongſt mankind, if this ſcheme were to be taken as rigorouſly true, and to be truly and cloſely purſued. And let thoſe people who profeſs it, diſtinguiſh and qualify, and try to evade the conſequence how they will or can, yet it is unavoidable, and they can never fairly get off from it.

I make no doubt, but many perſons in this ſcheme are men of great probity and virtue, and prove excellent members of ſociety, in whatſoever ſtation of life they are: but they muſt pardon me, if I deny it to be the effect of the principles of their *Hypotheſis*; and ſay, that tho' they are very good men, yet they are very bad ſcholars of their maſter *Spinoſa*.

* *Pythagoras*, qui cenſuit animum eſſe, per naturam rerum omnium intentum & commeantem, *ex quo noſtri animi carperentur*: non videt, diſtractione humanorum animorum, *Diſcerpi* ac *Dilacerari DEUM*, & cum miſeri animi eſſent, quod pleriſque contigeret, tum *DEI partem eſſe miſeram*; quod fieri non poteſt. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib.* 1. *p.* 7.

Nor

Nor do I urge this matter of the *conſequences*, as an *argument* with thoſe Gentlemen; ſo much as to ſhew, how far the ſubverſion of all religion may, without any breach of charity, be ſuppoſed to have been the wretched end and deſign of the modern patrons of this *Hypotheſis*, in their propoſing it to the world with ſo much pomp and ceremony as they have done.

SECT. XIII.

GOD *is not the entire ſyſtem or comprehenſion of* all Beings *together*; *but a* Being, *within the abſolute infinity of whoſe ſimple eſſence all other Beings are comprehended and contained*; *not as* parts *or* modifications *of his ſubſtance, but diſtinct* effects *of his power and will, receiving all from him, and continually dependant on him.*

It may, perhaps, be a conſiderable inducement with ſome people to admit that odd ſcheme of GOD's being the whole and every part of the univerſe, *That it does not appear how he can be ſaid to be ſtrictly and abſolutely infinite, if there be any* other *Being but himſelf, or any Being, which in a proper ſenſe is not himſelf, or is really diſtinct from his own eſſence or ſubſtance.* So that finding it neceſſary upon other accounts to allow the attribute of *infinity*, and not ſeeing how this can conſiſt with a *diſtinction* or *diverſity* of ſubſtance, they from hence are inclined to think themſelves ſecure of the truth of the other *Hypotheſis*.

But this is all founded upon a palpable miſtake. For,

It is not incompatible with ſtrict and abſolute *infinity* that there ſhould be ſubſtance *diſtinct from God*, or ſome ſubſtance *which is not GOD*.

The notion of *infinity* does not imply *being every thing* but *being without any poſſible bounds or limits of eſſence and perfection.*

And therefore, if the ſuppoſition of *other ſubſtance diſtinct from God*, does not naturally and neceſſarily involve

and imply any thing that is fundamentally contrary to, or deſtructive of this; then the ſaid ſuppoſition may conſiſt perfectly well with that of abſolute *infinity*: And conſequently, thoſe who adhere to the *Hypotheſis* of the Τὸ πᾶν, are cut off from all poſſibility of arguing from that topick of the *inconſiſtency* or *incompatibility* of them.

Now I will venture to aſſert, that the ſuppoſition of *other ſubſtance diſtinct from GOD*, does not naturally and neceſſarily involve or imply any thing fundamentally contrary to, or deſtructive of a true and juſt notion of *infinity*; in ſhort, that there is no manner of repugnancy or inconſiſtency between them.

And the reaſon of it is plainly thus: Becauſe the *being* or *exiſtence* of *other ſubſtance*, does neither imply any *Circumſcription*, *Contraction*, or *Limitation*, nor any ſubjecting of the divine being to a poſſibility or capacity of *meaſure* or *comprehenſion*; nor any *excluſion* of its Eſſence, Preſence, or Activity, in any conceivable or poſſible *Ubi* whatſoever: And therefore it is not incompatible with abſolute *infinity*.

I grant, indeed, that if *not being the very inward eſſence or ſubſtance of a thing* would neceſſarily imply or infer *ſimple abſence* or *excluſion*; or if it would infer the utter impoſſibility of an *intimate eſſential preſence*, *or* co-exiſtence *with the entire eſſence of that thing*; that then in this caſe we ſhould conſequentially deny the *infinity* of GOD, by aſſerting the poſſibility of the exiſtence of *other ſubſtance* diſtinct from himſelf. But ſince *not being the very inward eſſence or ſubſtance of a thing*, will by no means infer limitation or circumſcription, abſence or excluſion; nor will it ever infer the poſſibility of an *intimate eſſential preſence*, or *co-exiſtence with the entire eſſence of that thing*: Therefore we conclude the poſſibility of the exiſtence of *other ſubſtance* diſtinct from GOD; and at the ſame time, with equal truth and conſiſtency, maintain his *infinity* in the ſtricteſt and moſt abſolute ſenſe.

On

On the other hand, it is as clear as the day, that the *Hypotheſis* of the Τὸ πᾶν directly overturns the notion of the *infinity* of GOD, and conſequently ſubverts that of his *exiſtence*, and ſo point-blank eſtabliſhes *Atheiſm*.

For if *to conſiſt of parts*; if *to be diviſible, moveable, liable to change, Alteration and Corruption*, yea to innumerable varieties of *Changes, Viciſſitudes, Tranſmutations* and *Corruptions:* If this be, in the nature of the thing, inconſiſtent, or impoſſible ever to conſiſt with *ſtrict* and *abſolute infinity*; then it is evident to a demonſtration, that the *infinite Being cannot be the complex of the whole univerſe.* And conſequently, thoſe who aſſert he is ſo, do (whether ignorantly, or with ſet deſign, they know beſt) ſet up a ſcheme that has a direct and immediate tendency to ſubvert all notions of a deity, and baniſh the belief of his exiſtence out of the world.

SECT. XIV.

GOD, *who is infinite and eſſential reaſon, or a* thinking ſubſtance, *of infinite and abſolute perfection*; *as ſuch is eſſentially and intimately preſent, or does in the moſt perfect manner co-exiſt with the entire eſſence of every created ſubſtance.* Upon this account he is as far from being any *how* limited or circumſcribed, or any *where* ſhut out or excluded, as if he were the very inmoſt eſſence or ſubſtance of thoſe created beings themſelves.

The preſence, therefore, of this *great Being* is by no means confined to heaven, or the ſuperior and more noble regions of the univerſe, as *Ariſtotle* and his followers made it to be.

Nor is he, as the ſchool of *Epicurus* repreſented him, *mindleſs of the concerns of this lower world*; or an idle ſpectator of the actions and affairs of mankind.

Nor has he wholly left the government and adminiſtration of things to inferior *Demons*, as the *Platoniſts*

and *Pythagoreans* would have it; whoſe avowed tenet it was, *Quod nullus Deus miſceatur homini.* For,

As the *knowledge* of an *infinite mind* is *infinite*; ſo likewiſe are all its *thoughts* and *cares.*

If there were any object or thing, how ſeemingly mean and deſpicable ſoever, that had not a ſhare of its care and contrivance, or government and diſpoſition; it were no longer an infinite, but a limited contracted *mind*, and therefore not a *GOD.*

There is, therefore, moſt certainly a *providence* in the world, from whoſe laws no creature or thing can be exempted; by which all things are regulated, ordered and diſpoſed, in the whole frame of nature, as well in the *material ſyſtem*, as amongſt *rational* and *intellectual ſubſtances.*

This *providence* is no other than the unſearchable *wiſdom*, the unalterable *rectitude*, the impartial *juſtice*, the immenſe *goodneſs* and *benignity* of the divine nature diſplayed in the government of created beings.

As, therefore, it is ſimply impoſſible that there ſhould be any intrinſick unfitneſs or irregularity in any of its diſpenſations, how ſtrange or obſcure ſoever they appear to us; ſo it is evident that all the objections or difficulties which ever were, or ever can poſſibly be ſtarted againſt this doctrine, are entirely founded upon, muſt neceſſarily ariſe from, and be ultimately reſolved into the ſhallowneſs and debility of a poor *finite mind*, which can no more penetrate into the myſterious reaſons of the conduct of an *infinite underſtanding*, than it can ſpread into *infiniteneſs* and *almightineſs*, or become a GOD itſelf.

Moreover, all things whatſoever being originally adjuſted, ordered and diſpoſed by the infinitely wiſe and profound thought of the ſupreme being; and being afterwards brought forth in time, in their various orders and ſeaſons under his direction or permiſſion, according to, and in purſuance of, his own moſt divine and perfect ſcheme: Hence we are neither on one ſide to reckon any event to be a pure *accident* or *contingency*; nor on the other,

other, to derive it from blind *mechanical neceſſity*, or inexorable *Fate* in the vulgar ſenſe: But in all caſes, to acknowledge, and have an eye to the *divine counſels* and *diſpoſals*; within the verge of which, all kinds of events are comprehended, how caſual and fortuitous, or how neceſſary and inevitable ſoever they may ſeem to us to be.

Nothing has tended more to eradicate all ſenſe of a Deity out of the minds of men, and to extinguiſh all devout and religious affections in their breaſt towards him, than the wretched ſchemes and notions that have been advanced in the world upon this ſubject of a *providence*. * *Tully*, indeed, charges the *Epicurean* ſcheme in particular with this; but thoſe of many other Philoſophers were certainly as bad. I will not ſtand to diſpute here, whether *Heraclitus*, *Empedocles*, *Democritus*, *Pythagoras*, *Parmenides*, I may add, *Leucippus*, *Chryſippus*, and many more beſides, did in reality make all human actions to be the reſult of a ſevere, inexorable *Fate:* Some doctrines of this kind were advanced among them; and it is as certain, likewiſe, that the *Pythagoreans* and *Platoniſts*, out of a fondneſs for the *Egyptian* and *Chaldean* Philoſophy; and in general, all the admirers of *Aſtrology*, did too much ſubject human actions and affairs to the power and influence of the ſtars.

The *Stoicks* are commonly charged with binding up the very *deity* itſelf in the chains of *fate*, and conſequently deſtroying all his *moral government:* and the *Peripateticks* did no better, when they made him either not to *act* at all, or elſe to do it from an abſolute neceſſity of *nature*. The grand *Platonick year*, and the *revolution* or *circulation* talked of by ſome of the *Stoicks*, with other fancies of that kind, all tended to ſuggeſt and eſtabliſh the ſame looſe notions of a *deity*, and his *government* amongſt mankind. But put them all together, and they need no other refutation than this, *That GOD is an in-*

* Cicer. de Nat. Deor. lib. 2.

finitely perfect, intelligent Being. For from hence follows an infinitely exact and particular, free, wise, righteous and merciful administration of the affairs of the world.

This inspection and presidency of the *deity* in and over the lower world, was expressly and very consistently acknowledged by that same philosopher before-mentioned *, who argued for the immortality and future happy state of separate virtuous souls. But that a professed *Stoick* † should do it, tho' a very great and excellent man, is, I think, hardly agreeable to the rigid principles of the sect, as they are commonly understood and explained. Tho' I must needs say, I cannot but think the doctrines of that sect have been much misrepresented, and particularly in this very point of GOD's concern about the affairs of mankind; since it appears from many passages in *Epictetus* and *Seneca*, as well as from those just now referred to in *Antoninus*, that they firmly believed this doctrine. And the truth of it is, there is (generally speaking) a nearer approach to *christianity* in the *morals*, *discipline*, and *dogmata* of that noble sect, than in those of any other sect whatsoever.

However, let who will assert it or deny it, it is a most certain and necessary *corollary*, from the *demonstrable perfections* and *attributes* of a *deity*: Begin but there, and this of his *providence* and *government* will follow of course.

SECT. XV.

SInce the *supreme being* must needs be *infinitely* and *essentially good*, as well as *wise*, *powerful*, &c. it has been esteemed no little difficulty to shew how *evil* came into the world. *Unde malum* has been a mighty question.

* Sallust. cap. 9.

Phurnutus, *likewise, in his book* περὶ τῆς τῶν θεῶν φύσεως. cap. 2. *discourses well upon this subject, and shews in particular how upon this very account the deity was called* Anima Mundi.

† Marc. Antonin. lib. 2. sect. 11. lib. 1. sect. 17.

There

There were ſome, who, in order to ſolve this, ſuppoſed (as *Diogenes Laertius*, ſpeaking of the *Magi*, tells us from *Ariſtotle*) two ſupreme *governing principles*, or *demons*; the one a *good*, and the other an *evil* and pernicious one: Which *latter* was made independent on, and of equal power with the *former*, and the author of all that was irregular and bad in the univerſe. This monſtrous ſcheme the *Manichees*, in the times of *Chriſtianity*, fell into, and much improved; but was ſufficiently confuted herein, as well as divers other horrid abſurdities which they maintained, by a father, who had reaſon to be particularly well acquainted with their tenets, and was extremely well able to expoſe the folly of them; I mean the great St. *Auguſtine*.

But the plain truth of the caſe is, the *Hypotheſis* requires no more, in order to its confutation, than the bare propoſing of it. *Duo ſumma principia*, *Two ſupreme independent principles*, is next door to a downright expreſs contradiction in terms. It is certain, there can be nothing of a *dogma* more impoſſible or more abſurd. It is the very ſame thing in reſult and conſequence, as ſaying *two abſolute infinites*; and he that ſays *two*, had as good ſay *ten*, or *fifty*, or any other number whatſoever. Nay, if there can be *two eſſentially diſtinct abſolute infinites*, there may be an infinity of ſuch abſolute infinites; that is as much as to ſay, none of them all would be an *abſolute infinite*, or that none of them would be properly and really infinite; for *real* infinity is *ſtrict* and *abſolute* infinity, and only that. But it is not worth while to argue againſt ſo barefaced an abſurdity as this.

From what has been ſaid in PART II. concerning the nature of *Liberty* and *Free-will*, we may deduce a very poſſible and ſatisfactory (I had almoſt ſaid, the only juſt and poſſible) account of the *origin of evil*.

There are, and muſt neceſſarily be, ſome original intrinſick agreements and diſagreements, fitneſſes and unfitneſſes of certain things and circumſtances, to and with each

each other, which are antecedent to all positive institution and law, and founded on the very natures of those things and circumstances, considered in themselves, and in their relations to each other.

As these all fall within the comprehensions of an infinite discerning mind, who is likewise infinite essential rectitude and reason; so those on one side must necessarily (to speak after the manner of men) be chosen or approved of by him, as the other disliked and disapproved; and this upon the score of the eternal, intrinsick agreeableness and disagreeableness of them.

Farther, it was no way inconsistent with, or derogating from any one perfection of an infinite Being, to endow other beings which he had made with such a power as what we call *Liberty:* That is, to furnish them with such capacities, dispositions, and principles of action, that it should be possible for them either to observe or to deviate from those eternal rules and measures of fitness and agreeableness, with respect to certain things and circumstances, which were so conformable to the infinite rectitude of his own will, and which infinite all-comprehending reason and penetration must necessarily see and discover in the profundity of its own essence. Now *evil* is a deviation from those measures of unerring *eternal order* and *reason.* This is *evil*; not to chuse and not to approve what is in itself agreeable, and therefore worthy to be chosen, and is accordingly chosen and approved of by *such a mind*, and *such a will*, as the divine. So that, together with a breach of intrinsick original right and order, it includes a contradiction or opposition to the reason and rectitude of an *infinite mind*, which judges and necessarily approves of that order.

Now for the bringing this about, there is no more necessary, than the exerting certain acts of that power which we call by the name of *Free-will.*

For by this we are enabled to *chuse* or to *refuse*, and can determine ourselves to action and practice accordingly.

ly. And when our choice is made one way, we do what is *good*; when the contrary, we do *evil*. And therefore, without having recourſe to any ill *genius* or *demon*, we may fairly and ſolidly account for the *origin of evil*, from the *poſſibility of a various uſe or application of our liberty*; even as that *capacity* or *poſſibility* itſelf is ultimately founded on the *defectibility* and *finiteneſs* of a created nature.

I can by no means ſee any juſt and regular ſteps, by which a man ſhould come to any ſuch concluſion as this; *That it is the divine will alone that* makes right *and* good; *or that things are fit and agreeable, only becauſe GOD wills them; and not that he wills them, becauſe they are really and intrinſically ſo.*

It is a mere jeſt to alledge, *That otherwiſe there would be ſomethng prior too, independent on, and ſo a cauſe of, the will of GOD.*

GOD's will, is his pure, perfect, and ſimple eſſence; in the immenſity of which alone he beholds all truth, order and fitneſs; nor can he poſſibly have any *reaſon* or *motive* out of himſelf, ſince all is comprehended in his own *abſolute infinity*. So that to argue any thing of priority to, or caſuality upon, the will of GOD; if he wills things becauſe of their fitneſs, and does not make them ſo by willing; amounts to the making a ſuppoſition, that is a flat contradiction, to the nature of an infinite all-comprehending eſſence.

For it intimates, as if thoſe *agreeableneſſes* or *fitneſſes* were ſomething that was intrinſick or foreign to GOD, and not what he contemplates in his own eſſence. Whereas it is here, in this boundleſs perfection, this abſolute immenſity, that he diſcovers all the poſſible relations and agreements of things: Here, I ſay, where nothing is or can be *prior* or *poſterior*, *cauſing* or *cauſed*; but all is comprehended in *one view*, and by *one ſimple perfect act*. Take the matter thus, which is certainly the right and genuine way of taking it, and then I think there is no room for any objection that deſerves any notice upon this head.

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

IN what ſenſe ſoever it can be ſaid or underſtood, that *infinite reaſon* and *infinite goodneſs* muſt neceſſarily contrive, make, and diſpoſe all things in the beſt manner, and to the beſt advantage, and for the *beſt* ends and purpoſes; in that ſame ſenſe, and that only, can it be ſaid, that it was *neceſſary* the world ſhould be ſuch as it is; or that GOD ſhould contrive, make and diſpoſe of it, and all particular beings and events in and relating to it, in that order and manner that he has contrived, made, and does actually diſpoſe of it and them: And in that ſame ſenſe likewiſe, and that only, can it be ſaid, that the ſtructure and contrivance of the whole, is, of *all*, the *beſt* that could be; or that it could not be any otherwiſe than it is; with many other ſuch like conſequences. A man may, without any ſcruple or heſitation, own and aſſert ſuch a *neceſſity* as this; and give any *Atheiſt*, *Deiſt*, or *Fataliſt* leave to make their beſt earnings of the conceſſion. For *neceſſity*, which proceeds from *perfect knowledge* of what is fitteſt to be done, and from *perfect goodneſs* and *will* to chuſe what is known to be fitteſt, is infinitely remote from all *blind mechanical neceſſity*, and from *fate* and *deſtiny*, in the vulgar ſenſe and acceptation of thoſe words. And as nothing of the *eternity* or *ſelf-exiſtence* of *matter* can ever poſſibly be inferred from it; ſo neither does it involve any thing inconſiſtent with a compleat and perfect *liberty*; the notion of liberty being duly ſtated and abſtracted from all imperfections.

Therefore none of all thoſe people can ever make any uſe (in the way of fair and juſt reaſoning) a conceſſion of *ſuch neceſſity* as this, in order to eſtabliſh any notion or ſcheme, with reſpect to the *operations* or *productions* of a *firſt cauſe*, that will at all claſh with any article that we profeſs to believe concerning the Being and Perfections of GOD: I ſay, they cannot do it in the

the way of *fair* and *juſt reaſoning:* For when they once come to *Gueſſes* and *Hypotheſis*, or mere *probabilities*, *veriſimilitudes*, and the like, the argument is at an end, and we have no more to ſay. But let them infer what they will in the ſtrict and allowed way of drawing conſequences, and I believe we need not ſcruple offering to ſtand by them.

It is moſt certain, that the formal nature, or eſſence of *liberty*, does not lie in a *ſuſpence*, an *indifference*, or *indetermination ad oppoſita.*

There is no doubt to be made, but that there is ſuch a Phenomenon in human nature as this *indifference*, or *indetermination:* And I have ſhewn expreſsly in PART II. what uſes we are able to make of it, and how far we can extend and carry it, with reſpect to objects that are propoſed to us.

But then it is one thing to ſpeak of an *effect* or *branch*, or perhaps an *imperfection* or *defect* of liberty; and another to ſpeak of the very *formality* or *intrinſick nature* of liberty itſelf.

Now we are aſſured, from the knowledge and experience we have of *our own conſtitutions*, that in a vaſt number of caſes that occur, wherein we act from a *rational neceſſity*, and are determined only one way, by the prevailing motives of *fitneſs*, *goodneſs* and *agreeableneſs*; that yet we *act freely*, or with a *true* and *proper liberty:* And that, becauſe there is all the complacency and delight, all the pleaſing tendency and acquieſcency of mind, all the harmony and conſent of thought, that we ever experience on any occaſions, wherein we can reckon ourſelves to act with the trueſt *freedom*, or that we can conceive to be neceſſary, in order to the making or denominating a power to be a power of *acting freely.*

If the real, intrinſick nature of *liberty* does not lie here, or hereabouts; if this be not ſufficient, in the nature and reaſon of things, to denominate *actions free*; then no actions that we can ever exert, let them be what they

they will, can poſſibly be either juſtly *rewardable* or *puniſhable*, by *GOD* or *man*: And if we once come to that, we need not diſpute about *liberty*, or any thing elſe.

So that, I ſay, here we muſt fix, and ſit down with this concluſion, *That the divine being, who acts from perfect knowledge, and perfect goodneſs and rectitude of nature, is alſo the moſt perfectly and compleatly free in all his operations and productions.*

After what has been ſaid here, and in other parts of this diſcourſe, I need not ſpend time in demonſtrating, that *matter* cannot be a *neceſſary ſelf-exiſtent ſubſtance*; Nor that the *material world* was not produced by a mere *ſimple* or *abſolute neceſſity of nature.*

For if there be in the nature of things ſuch a power or principle as *liberty:* If this could no more ariſe from, or be the effect of *abſolute neceſſity*, than *figure* can be the effect of *motion*, or material extenſion of ſimple *indiviſibility*; or a power of thinking can ariſe from, or be made up of *that* which is not thinking: Then it is certain that there is *liberty*, in a ſupreme and moſt perfect degree, in that being which made us free; even as it is alſo demonſtrable he muſt be thoughtful and intelligent, becauſe he has made us ſo. And if this be true, then I need not ſay any more to prove that this notion of *producing by mere abſolute neceſſity of nature* is falſe and impoſſible, as being utterly inconſiſtent with the perfection of that Being.

And then, as to the *neceſſary ſelf-exiſtence of matter*, the Phenomena of the univerſe are palpable demonſtrations of the infinite abſurdity of ſuch a ſuppoſition. I ſhall only mention one, *viz. The different Specifick Gravity of Bodies.*

Portions of matter of the ſame bulk are unequally heavy.

Therefore under the ſame dimenſions, there is not the ſame quantity of matter.

There-

Therefore there are vacuities, or ſpaces not replete with matter.

Therefore matter does not exiſt every where.

Therefore matter does not neceſſarily exiſt: For what neceſſarily exiſts, muſt exiſt every where, and every where alike.

Therefore neither is it a ſelf-exiſtent ſubſtance, nor did it exiſt from eternity, nor is it any part or attribute of the divine eſſence.

The mechanical people have been often nibbling at this argument, for proving a vacuity, drawn from the different ſpecifick gravities of matter; but it concludes with too much evidence and ſtrength, ever to be ſhaken by all their little unphiloſophical attempts: And I make no ſcruple to aſſert, That *that* Phenomenon of the different weights of bodies can never be ſolved by any mechanical Hypotheſis of *Gravitation* whatſoever, let them go which way to work they can.

SECT. XVII.

TO conclude all: Such a Being as GOD is, infinitely perfect, immenſe, intelligent, juſt, free, good, provident and careful of all his creatures, deſerves our higheſt praiſe and admiration, our love and gratitude, our fear and obedience, our truſt and dependance.

It is reaſonable that we direct all our actions to his glory, and make the ſerving of him the chief buſineſs of life.

That we be humble and modeſt in all our ſpeeches and conceptions of him, in all our reaſonings about his incomprehenſible eſſence, and our enquiries into his ways and diſpenſations.

That we do not oppoſe our own undeſtandings to his unſearchable wiſdom, bring him down to our ſchemes and meaſures; or conclude that is fitteſt and moſt

moſt worthy of him to do, that we judge to be beſt and fitteſt in our ſhallow capacity, or our biaſſed and prejudiced judgments.

The undoubted and demonſtrable perfections of his nature are the only ſure natural *foundation for us to go upon, in the way of* thinking *and* conceiving *of him, and of* behaving *ourſelves aright towards him.*

And if from a due and ſerious conſideration of thoſe demonſtrable attributes and perfections of his nature, we ſhall find it highly agreeable and reaſonable to believe, that ſuch a Being as he ſhould, out of his infinite love and care of his creatures, make any *ſupernatural revelations* of his mind and will, in order to the retrieving the diſorders of the world, and making mankind fully and compleatly happy: Then we ſhould be exceeding cautious how we ſet up any ſchemes or notions of our own, in oppoſition to ſuch *revelations* or *diſcoveries*; and if we have any of us begun to do ſo, ſhould withdraw from all ſuch Methods in good time, that we may not loſe the *Benefit* of what he has *revealed.*

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FINIS.